

The  
COLONIAL NEWSLETTER  
A Research Journal in Early American Numismatics

Volume 55, Number 3

December 2015

Serial Number 159



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**US ISSN 0010-1443**

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*The Colonial Newsletter* (CNL) is published three times a year by The American Numismatic Society (ANS), 75 Varick Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10013. CNL is available at the rate of \$45 per year for ANS members and \$60 per year for non-members. For inquiries concerning CNL, please contact Catherine DiTuri at the above postal address: e-mail <membership@numismatics.org>; telephone (212) 571-4470 ext. 117, or FAX (212) 571-4479. One can subscribe to CNL online or download a subscription form from the ANS website at <www.numismatics.org/CNL/CNL>.

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We encourage our readers to consider submitting material on early North American numismatics to CNL for publication. In general, this includes coins, tokens, paper money, and medals that were current before the U.S. Federal Mint began operations in 1793. However, there are certain pieces produced after the 1793 date that have traditionally been considered part of pre-Federal numismatics and should be included. We cover all aspects of study regarding the manufacture and use of these items. Our very knowledgeable and friendly staff will assist potential authors to finalize submissions by providing advice concerning the text and help with illustrations. Submissions in either electronic or hard copy format, should be sent to the editor via the e-mail address given above or through the ANS at their postal address. Electronic text submissions should be formatted in Word with separate grayscale images.



### Editorial

Jeff Rock kicks off this issue of *The Colonial Newsletter* with a discussion of the rare Miller 2.3-T Bungtown Connecticut copper type and some thoughts about collecting in our times. His look back on the previous era of great sales and on the opportunities provided by the market at present and in the near future are particularly fitting for a year-end issue.

The bulk of CNL-159 is taken up by an interesting subject that has only rarely graced the pages of *The Colonial Newsletter* before: early Indian Peace Medals. In a challenging article by Ron Miller and Gary Gianotti, the authors argue that the engravers responsible for the oval George Washington Indian Peace Medals of 1792 and 1793 signed their work by hiding their initials in the cross-hatching and other design elements. Based on the initials that they have deciphered, it is suggested that a guild of Philadelphia engravers centered on Robert Scot and especially Joseph Wright Jr. worked together to produce the medals.

This article pushes the bounds of traditional interpretation and will no doubt spark much debate. Who knows, maybe engraved George Washington Indian

Peace Medals will become the new Wood-33 in the pages of *The Colonial Newsletter*. Readers may recall the spate of disagreement regarding this popular Blacksmith/Evasion copper in CNL-156 and 157. On the other hand, authentic Washington Indian Peace Medals are somewhat more difficult for the average collector to find (and afford!) than a good example of a Wood-33 and therefore perhaps less likely to incite passions than coins that almost everyone has in their collections. I know that I have far fewer (total 0) of the medals than I would really like in my personal collection. In fact, the only way I get to spend any time with them at all has been through preparing the forthcoming catalogue of the Indian Peace Medals in the cabinet of the American Numismatic Society.

It is a somewhat rare occasion when articles have been submitted for CNL well in advance of the next issue, but I am extremely happy to report that in CNL-160 readers can look forward to an important article on Ricketts's Circus tokens by Roger Siboni as well as an update on finds of Islamic coins in early American contexts. There are a lot more than anyone seems to have guessed, reminding us yet again just how great it is to be living in the age of the metal

detector. The April issue will also see the return of the plate series dedicated to publishing the Colonial coins in the ANS collection.

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**Bungtown Bonanza!**  
**The Discovery—and Rediscovery—of an Extremely Rare**  
**Connecticut Copper**

by  
**Jeff Rock; San Diego, CA**

Collectors of colonial coins are used to extreme rarities in pretty much every series. There are major types and die varieties that are legendary—and which seldom appear for sale. Decades, a generation, a lifetime, or even a century or more can go by without some of these pieces ever appearing for public sale, and the longer the stretch between sightings of a particular variety, the more hallowed it becomes.

Collectors of today, however, have lived through an amazing period in numismatic history—one that is really unprecedented, and perhaps has gone unrecognized for the opportunities it has offered. In a period of just 35 years we have witnessed a flood of Colonials coming to the market. In that time major collections like Garrett, Roper, Picker, Taylor, Norweb, Brand, Eliasberg, Oechsner, Ford, and Newman have all come to auction, as well as the first section of the legendary Partrick collection (with future sections of that collection currently on hold, but expected to be sold within the next 5–10 years). To these major auctions one can add a multitude of smaller, perhaps more specialized sales to the list—Perkins, Griffie, O'Donnell, Hains, Matlock, Hinkley, Lindesmith, H. Garrett, Cole, Hessberg, Collins, Foreman—the list goes on and on, and another three dozen “name sales” could be added without much effort.

When one takes a look at the first group of major sales, one is struck by the fact that a very large number of the coins that they contained were off the market for periods of 50–100 years, and those collections contained some of the rarest of the rare Colonial coins. Garrett was a multi-generation collection that was held in a college museum for another half century after it was formed. Norweb was also a multi-generation collection and held intact by the family until it was decided to sell. Brand and Eliasberg were formed by single collectors, but were off the market (at least some parts of the Brand collection) for decades after their owners passed away. The Ford and Newman collections both contained coins from earlier collectors that were acquired privately—Ford with the majority of the F. C. C. Boyd collection (which included the Ryder collection and chunks of the Dr. Hall and Virgil Brand collections) and Newman with delicacies from the Colonel Green collection—meaning many of the coins in those two collections were last publicly offered for public sale a century or more ago.

It would boggle the mind of a collector from, say, the 1940s or even the 1970s to think of the huge number of Colonials that have come on the market in just this 35-year period. Perhaps the only time something even remotely comparable happened was in the era when the Mickley, Bushnell, Crosby, Parmalee, and a few other major collections were sold in a similar stretch of time—and, of course, many of those coins went into these later major collections which had been off the market for long periods. This embarrassment of riches has given all of us an unprecedented chance to add things to our collections—including things that we probably thought we would never actually get the chance to see, let alone bid on.

One of the most interesting areas, at least for this writer, was the extremely crude contemporary counterfeit Connecticut coppers dated 1786, popularly known as the “Bungtown Issues.” While going into the history of this group—all clearly related to each other—is something that will be done in more detail when Randy Clark's Connecticut copper book reaches print, a brief overview is permissible here. A single variety was known to Betts, who was the first to illustrate

it in 1886. Another specimen of the same variety was known to Dr. Hall when he added one to his collection in the next decade. Other varieties, similar in crudeness and rarity came to light over the next century or so, with Ned Barnsley attempting to put them into some order. He listed four known varieties. This author continued his listing of them in his 1991 *Colonial Newsletter* article updating Miller—but this was done without ever seeing any examples in hand, only through the use of photographs of differing quality (and these photos were of coins that were crude to say the least).<sup>1</sup> Eventually the list of known varieties climbed to seven, some of which appear to be from the same die, with repair work or recutting of elements making them different enough to be considered new varieties.

To specialists, the 1786 Bungtowns were indeed pieces of legendary rarity—the only public auction of one was in the 1919 Miller Sale. Every sale of Connecticut coppers offered since that time up to the 2005 sale of the Connecticut coppers portion of the John Ford collection has not had any Bungtown variety, including the famous EAC '75 sale. To finally hold and examine the Ford specimen was simply amazing. While dreams of owning something like that were quickly squelched when the sale price hit almost \$100,000 (setting a record for a Connecticut copper that would last until the Keller sale over a half decade later), for someone who really enjoys this series, it was akin to an art lover being able to hold the Mona Lisa and examine it in detail.

Fast forward a couple years when, surprise, a private collector decided to sell his few remaining coins – including a small group of 1786 Bungtown Connecticut coppers! Bought from the 1950's to the early 1970's, all from private sources, these coins were mostly unknown to the collecting community and were quickly placed into another private collection. While not “publicly” offered for sale (i.e. at an auction or in a price list), the coins were shared by their new owner. Experts were permitted to view and study them and their existence was added to the roster of known specimens. That list of known pieces then included four other coins, two of which are in the permanent collection of the American Numismatic Society (one coming from Ned Barnsley via the Colonial Newsletter Foundation Collection) and two more in the Eric Newman collection, which was also presumed to be off the market until recently.

The Newman pieces both sold in 2014, one for a little less than the Ford coin and the other for such a ridiculously low price that more than one of us in the audience considered it to be the bargain of the sale – but the winning bidder was prepared to go much, much higher so many of us just sighed and put our hands down, knowing we weren't going to win that battle.

With the sale of the Newman pair, all known specimens of the 1786 Bungtown Connecticut copper types that were held privately had been seen and offered for sale (not including the pair in the ANS, of course) in a period of just under a decade. Again, an embarrassment of riches since the last public sale was 1919, nearly a century earlier! Well, at least we thought all known specimens had been seen...and we finally get to the real story here.

A few weeks after the Newman sale was completed, and the coin newspapers had run stories on the amazing coins and even more amazing prices, the author received a phone call from a metal detectorist he had purchased things from in the past. The conversation started off with, “Hey, I have one of those counterfeit Connecticut copper thingies that just sold for a lot of money. I found it about 8 or 9 years ago.” My answer was, “No, you don't. Those are extremely rare. You probably have a Connecticut copper from 1786 or maybe one of the crude counterfeit British halfpennies that look kind of similar, especially if you can't see much of the legend.” His response was, “Hang on, let me take a pic with my phone.” When I saw the image my shocked reply was only, “You really do have one!” Amazingly, the piece had lain unidentified in his “junk box” (his words) of ground finds, with other pieces, some of which were Colonial, that he was



**Figure 1.** The new Miller 2.3-T Bungtown type (top) compared to the Miller-Ford example (bottom).  
Note especially the distinct seated Liberty figure on the reverse.

*Top photo courtesy of Jack Howes and bottom photo courtesy of Stack's-Bowers.*

not able to identify by variety (the ones he was able to identify usually ended up sold on e-bay or, if slightly better varieties, sold to dealers like me).

The finder's cell phone images were not the greatest, but good enough to recognize the coin as the Miller 2.3-T type, the variety that was in the Ford sale.<sup>2</sup> The coin was eventually sent out to me, arriving just in time to take to this year's C4 Convention in Baltimore, where it thrilled some people, and left others somewhat less impressed because of its condition.<sup>3</sup>

The coin itself was probably fairly high grade when it was first lost. The surviving central detail is similar to the Miller-Ford coin, although a couple centuries in the ground have eaten away much of the peripheral detail. Traces of the legends can be seen, which certainly help to identify the variety, but the unique style of the reverse figure is more than enough for purposes of identification.

The new example is illustrated in Figure 1 along with the Miller-Ford coin for comparison purposes.

<sup>2</sup> The number will change when Randy Clark finishes his book, in which all the counterfeits are removed from the Miller 2 obverse family and given their own separate numbers.

<sup>3</sup> I am one of those people that think any R-8 variety is worth owning, even if it can be barely identified!

The ground find measures 27.70 mm in diameter and weighs 102.9 grains. The Ford piece is a little larger at 28.1 mm and 124.1 grains—the difference on the present example probably due to erosion while it was in the ground. The Ford piece is noted as being coin turn, while the ground find specimen has the reverse rotated 270 degrees. It is impossible to ascertain the die state on the found coin, but there seems to have been no appreciable die damage to any of the Bungtown varieties, suggesting that the counterfeiters recut/repared dies when any sort of damage appeared.

When dealing with many metal detectorists, getting accurate information about when and where something was found is often impossible—some just do not keep records, while others are secretive about sites that they are working, especially ones that yield items of value. This is understandable, and I was initially told the piece was found “near New Haven, but not in it.” A little more pressing—with no request for exact GPS coordinates or anything like that—yielded the fact that it was found in the city of North Branford, which is about 12 miles east of New Haven.

Far more interesting than either the “where” or the “when” was the “what” question—specifically, what else was found at the site? Not being a controlled archaeological dig, no records were kept of the depth of various finds, and as expected there were two hundred years’ worth of coins and artifacts found, ranging from more modern coins and bottle caps found on or slightly under the surface, to older pieces found at the depth of several inches or over a foot in some cases. The site is (or was) vacant, with the foundation of an older house still visible—the type of venue a metal detectorist always enjoys hunting around.

Colonial issues found at this site over the course of more than a year and 20 or more separate different visits, but found at roughly the same general depth as the Connecticut Bungtown, include over a dozen Connecticut coppers (two of which came in the same shovelful of earth with the Bungtown, a pair of Hibernia halfpennies (dates not visible), over 20 counterfeit British halfpence, a single New Jersey copper, and numerous large cents (but oddly no half cents, which is something the detectorist always hopes to find). Because of the soil condition and dampness, all of the copper issues (including pieces as modern as later-date Indian Head cents) showed signs of surface corrosion. The silver coinage (sadly, none of it was Colonial) fared much better; no gold was found at all. Artifacts found at the same general depth of the Colonials and early U.S. copper included buttons, broken clay pipes, shoe buckles, and horse harness equipment, as well as the usual mishmash of parts of things that could not be identified immediately.

The new find effectively seals the debate about when and, possibly, where the Bungtowns were made. Some have thought them to be later concoctions based solely on the fact that it was C. Wyllys Betts who found and illustrated the first example. This is the same Betts who made crude copies of Colonials in his youth, although these have no stylistic similarity whatsoever to the Connecticut Bungtown and Betts illustrated numerous other counterfeits that have never been questioned, including Atlee/Machin’s Mills coppers and 1781 and 1785 dated counterfeit British halfpence. The discovery of the Connecticut Bungtown alongside other Colonial coppers proves it to be of the same period. Certainly it would not have been struck after the Coppers Panic of 1789 wiped out the value of Connecticut coppers. Indeed, the 1786 date may well be the year it was actually struck. If it was produced at the same time that some of the unusual 1786 varieties (Miller 1-A, 2.1-A, 2.1-D.3, 2.2-D.3, 3-D.1, and 3-D.4 are all especially crude) were made, it might not have stood out as especially unusual. Once the more standardized version of the 1787 Draped Bust varieties were introduced, these earlier, cruder varieties may have been less acceptable in commerce, at least in a larger city, which might explain why the coin was found a dozen miles outside of New Haven. North Branford was not incorporated



as a city until 1831, although there were obviously people living in the rural area well before then, and there are examples of Colonial and Early American style houses within the city. Presumably residents would have traveled into New Haven or other nearby, larger towns for supplies, etc., as there do not appear to have been any businesses in the area at this early date. At least there were none that could be found through various Google searches.

While one coin does not answer all questions, its find in Connecticut, and very close to New Haven proper, suggests that the Connecticut Bungtowns were made locally. Really, the only two areas that make sense for them to have been produced is in Connecticut, where the type was well known and would have passed fairly easily, or New York where the Machin's Mills facility was adept at turning out crude, lightweight pieces. Walter Breen's suggestion that vague and mysterious North Swansea, Massachusetts, Bungtown mints produced Colonial counterfeits lacks any proof, although it is possible that they made some of the counterfeit Massachusetts cents, or, more likely, counterfeit British coppers and Spanish silver coinage. This is a good example of Breen's thought process: "Here we have some counterfeits and there we have a counterfeit mint site mentioned in passing in some records. Therefore the two must be related. Eureka!" Unfortunately, some of Breen's theories, like this one have sometimes become set in stone and treated as unchangeable even despite evidence to the contrary. This is not say that all of Breen's work is flawed, it just means that careful reading and a thorough examination of his sources is needed before anything is taken as gospel. Indeed, this is good advice when considering the work of any author.

Needless to say, the discovery of this coin—and, nearly a decade later, the discovery of what it actually was!—has been a thrilling event for the person who found it. It was just as thrilling for this writer, who has now seen all specimens of these Bungtowns in person, save for the one in the ANS from The Colonial Newsletter Foundation and Ned Barnsley Collections.

It may seem unusual that they all came out in just a decade or so, but what a decade this has been. Every known example of the silver Continental dollar has been sold in the period of a few years. More Higley coppers, NE and Willow Tree shillings, CONFEDERATIO coppers, New York "patterns," and other extreme rarities have been sold in the last 15 years than in the preceding century. We are fortunate to be living through a pretty remarkable time in the history of our little slice of the numismatic hobby. We should enjoy it while it lasts. If history is any indication, we could go from flood to drought once the current rounds of sales are done.



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**Hidden Initials by the Early American Engravers Guild:  
A Novel Approach to the Authentication and Attribution of Silver Oval  
George Washington Indian Peace Medals**

by  
**Ron Miller, PhD; Charleston, SC**  
and  
**Gary Gianotti; Milford, CT**

**Silver Oval George Washington Indian Peace Medals**

Virtually all we know to date about the silver oval Indian Peace Medals distributed during George Washington's administration can be attributed to the writings of a few talented and passionate numismatists. Some of these individuals include (in no particular order): Bauman L. Belden, Francis P. Prucha, George Fuld, John Kraljevich, Russell Rulau, Anthony Terranova, Michael Hodder, and Barry Tayman. The objective of this article is to shed some light on a plausible method of authentication of this challenging series through attribution.

During George Washington's administration, Peace Medals were an important part of the United States Federal Government's relationship with Native Americans. They were often presented to tribal leaders to secure treaties and cement political loyalties. The Native Americans loved ceremony and formality in the presentation of medals. The large silver oval, hand-engraved Washington medals dated 1789, 1792, 1793, and 1795, were produced in three sizes with the largest typically reserved for the principal chief or "great-medal chief." Each medal is believed to have been manufactured using two thin sheets of silver (one dedicated to the obverse and one to the reverse) joined together by a band of flattened silver wire fashioned with a loop at the top for suspension. Due to their unique construction and hand-engraving by Philadelphia-area silversmiths, the discernment of authenticity has traditionally relied upon the quality of craftsmanship and/or absolute, unequivocal pedigrees. Counterfeiting has been and continues to be an issue with these silver oval medals.

In 2011, the late George Fuld conducted a census of all authentic and "questionable" silver oval Washington peace medals and located 42 specimens.<sup>1</sup> Fuld went on to guess that a total of 500 oval medals were initially produced with only about 50 genuine medals still in existence. He recognized only about 10% of the extant genuine specimens in the fortunate hands of one or two private collectors, and the rest residing with the American Numismatic Society, various historical societies, museums, and the Public Archives of Canada.

One of the earliest and most authoritative books on Indian Peace Medals by Bauman Belden distinguished nine different silver oval Washington Peace Medal designs (or "plates").<sup>2</sup> Belden's classification of these varieties is still widely used today. It is unclear who designed these medals, but certainly, the designer realized that the United States' fledgling mint could not strike a medal or coin larger than a silver dollar. Local Philadelphia artists hired by the U.S. Mint employed similar designs dictated by the Quartermaster General, Thomas Mifflin of Philadelphia.

The obverse design is reminiscent of the reverse of the *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal engraved by Robert Scot in Williamsburg or Richmond in 1780 (Fig. 1). It depicts an

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<sup>1</sup> George J. Fuld, "Washington Oval Peace Medals," in George J. Fuld (ed.), *Peace Medals: Negotiating Peace in Early America* (Tulsa, OK): 52–62.

<sup>2</sup> Bauman L. Belden, *Indian Peace Medals Issued in the United States 1789-1889* (New York, 1927)



**Figure 1.** *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal, by Robert Scot, Richmond or Williamsburg, Virginia, 1780. From the collections of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (<http://www.history.org/history/teaching/enewsletter/volume8/oct09/primsources.cfm?showSite=mobile>).



**Figure 2.** Frontispiece *Mico Chlucco the Long Warrior or King of the Seminoles*, from *Bartram's Travels* published in Philadelphia in 1791. From Wikipedia ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartram's\\_Travels](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartram's_Travels)).

American Indian and an Anglo-American smoking a calumet, a ceremonial smoking pipe. Philadelphia engraver James Trenchard's *Mico Chlucco the Long Warrior* engraving (Fig. 2) published in 1791 possesses nearly identical styling of the Indian headdress feathers seen on these oval medals. Lastly, and perhaps most interesting, the oval shape of the medals, suggestive of a tortoise shell, combined with the inclusion of a tree strongly alludes to the Oneida tribe's (of upstate New York) Haudenonsaunee Creation Story. In this story, the great turtle of the earth had a tree grow from its back, and the earth grew to become North America, the Turtle Island. This exact design can be found on a silver gorget engraved by Peter Getz, arguably the first employee of the Federal Mint, (Fig. 3). Getz was a young silversmith from Lancaster, PA (65 miles west of Philadelphia) who was hired by the Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Robert Morris in late 1791 to engrave to his specifications "sample coins" (i.e., patterns) for the U.S. Mint. According to Stack's, Getz formally applied for a job at the U.S. Mint in the summer of 1792.<sup>3</sup> We assume that Getz used the motif found on the oval Washington medals for his gorget or vice versa.



**Figure 3.** Oval engraved American trade silver gorget by Peter Getz with tree of life atop turtle's back. Hallmarked "PG" in large block letters. *From the collection of John Armiger. Sold by Cowan's Auctions March 10, 2005* (<http://www.cowanauctions.com/auctions/item.aspx?ItemId=21071>).

The reverse design on the Washington silver oval medals bears the arms of the United States taken from the Great Seal design stunningly executed by James Trenchard for the September 1786 issue of *Columbian Magazine* (Fig. 4). Notice the randomly placed stars and clouds forming an arc with rays of glory stretching upward and outward. The outlines of the shield and eagle were engraved first on the oval medals. These were followed by details of the feathers, internal shield lines, the banner and motto E PLURIBUS UNUM, and lastly the horizontal lines behind the eagle's head along with the clouds and the rays of glory.

<sup>3</sup> Stack's Auction Catalog (November 7, 2006), lot 2024 (<http://legacy.stacks.com/Lot/ItemDetail/118309>).



To date, no Mint records have been located directly linking any Philadelphia artists to these silver oval medals. Only Joseph Richardson, Jr., with his signature JR hallmark has been confirmed to have engraved some of the silver oval medals. Some believe the few known silver oval medals hallmarked IR are also Richardson's although his father used the same hallmark until his death in 1784. Instead, we postulate that the IR hallmark may actually be a poorly stamped TR, and therefore names Trenchard. It is widely believed that Richardson worked on the large-size Chief Red Jacket silver oval medal dated 1792, despite the lack of a hallmark (Fig. 8, below). Only two other silver oval 1792 medals are known with hallmarks, both of JW (Figs. 10 and 11, below). This hallmark is believed to represent the initials of the first American etcher,<sup>4</sup> and first Engraver, Draughtsman, and Die-Sinker of the U.S. Mint, Joseph Wright, Jr.<sup>5</sup> The 1792 medals, particularly the small size, are the rarest of the silver oval medals. For subsequent issues, government archives reveal a delivery of at least 68 medals dated 1793 (50 hallmarked

JR and 18 with JL) and 114 oval medals dated 1795. It has been noted that most of the 1793 and 1795 medals were engraved by Richardson. The Chief Red Jacket medal and the later medals engraved by Richardson are superior in engraving artistry to other silver oval medals known. As we discuss and illustrate below, other Philadelphia engravers collaborated on the medals, largely under the auspices of the esteemed Scottish line engraver Robert Scot. The only other hallmark noted on these later issues is JL or IL. There are several candidates for the identification of JL, but it appears probable that these pieces were engraved by Joseph Loring



**Figure 4.** James Trenchard's Great Seal, published in the *Columbian Magazine* in 1786. Courtesy of Princeton University Library – Department of Rare Books and Special Collections.

4 J. R. W. Hitchcock, *Etching in America, with Lists of American Etchers and Notable Collections of Prints*. (New York, 1886): 14-16.

5 Monroe H. Fabian, *Joseph Wright: American Artist, 1756–1793* (Washington, D.C., 1985): 61.

of Boston, who used a JL hallmark after 1766, or possibly John Lynch of Baltimore, although he is only known to have used J. LYNCH as a hallmark around 1786.<sup>6</sup>

The skills of the local engravers of the oval medals varied considerably. The silver oval medals of 1792 lacking hallmarks show considerably more detail and shading than those dated 1789. It has been written that genuine silver oval medals were routinely polished using fine sand, and that this would cause the central area of the medal to appear more worn than the outer areas. However, a close examination of high-resolution images of medals presented here, in cited references, and in auction catalogs, reveals sporadic instances of such wear and inconsistent wear patterns, and if such patterns exist they appear to be fairly minor.

As chronicled in the 2015 book, *Robert Scot: Engraving Liberty*, by William F. Nyberg, we now know that under the tutelage of Master Mason Robert Scot, there were at least five apprentices and assistant engravers, including Samuel Allardice, James Thackera, John Vallance, Francis Shallus, and Joseph Wright, Jr. Scot delegated his workload to these men who worked together on a wide range of engraving projects in the 1780s and 1790s. The first four men are known to have assisted Scot in the massive undertaking of engraving numerous scientific plates for Thomas Dobson's *Encyclopædia* and other publications. Scot was one of, if not the only early American line engraver who permitted his apprentices and assistants to hide their initials in their work.<sup>7</sup> Artists have been known to sign their works using pseudonyms, monograms, symbols or indecipherable signatures.<sup>8</sup> Allardice and Shallus hid their initials in copperplate engravings while apprenticing for Scot and even after Scot became Chief Engraver at the U.S. Mint. Assistant U.S. Mint Engraver John Reich cleverly hid his initials, JR, in the Capped Bust coinage designs while Scot was Chief Engraver.<sup>9</sup> Wright's collaborations with Scot appear to be limited to medals, including the silver oval Washington medals on which we have identified both of their initials (Figs. 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13, below). Nyberg reported that Scot did not hide his initials in his work,<sup>10</sup> but we provide overwhelming evidence to the contrary here. The unique engraving styles of three to four artists combined with the presence of hidden initials on select silver oval medals, strongly suggests a collaborative effort was needed among Scot and his cadre of apprentices and assistant engravers to produce the large number of silver oval medals needed by the U.S. government in a short amount of time. At the same time that they had to complete this urgent work for the nascent U.S. Mint, these men also fulfilled other artistic obligations that were likely considerably more lucrative, including the burgeoning American publishing business. Further, we cannot emphasize strongly enough that to date we have been unable to identify any hidden initials on known counterfeit silver oval medals.

### **Robert Scot, First Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint**

Robert Scott (later shortened to Scot) was born in Canongate, Scotland in 1745. He was first trained as a watchmaker in England, and then learned the art of engraving. He arrived in America in 1774, and engraved plates for subsistence money, banknotes (Fig. 5), bills of exchange, and office scales. While living in Fredericksburg and later Richmond, Scot served as Virginia's state engraver beginning in 1780. He became acquainted with Thomas Jefferson and was hired to engrave the 1780 *Happy While United* Indian Peace Medal used to commemorate an alliance between the region's native tribes and the commonwealth (Fig. 1, above). In 1781 he fled the British invasion of Richmond and moved to Philadelphia where he developed a

6 Russell Rulau and George Fuld, *Medallic Portraits of Washington*, 2nd ed. (Iola, WI, 1999): 85.

7 Robert Scot: *Engraving Liberty* (2015) American History Press. By William F. Nyberg.

8 American Artists: Signatures and Monograms, 1800-1989. (1990) Scarecrow Press. By John Castagno.

9 William Nyberg. (2007) John Reich's Hidden Initials. John Reich Journal Volume 18, Issue 3.

10 Nyberg 2015: 85.



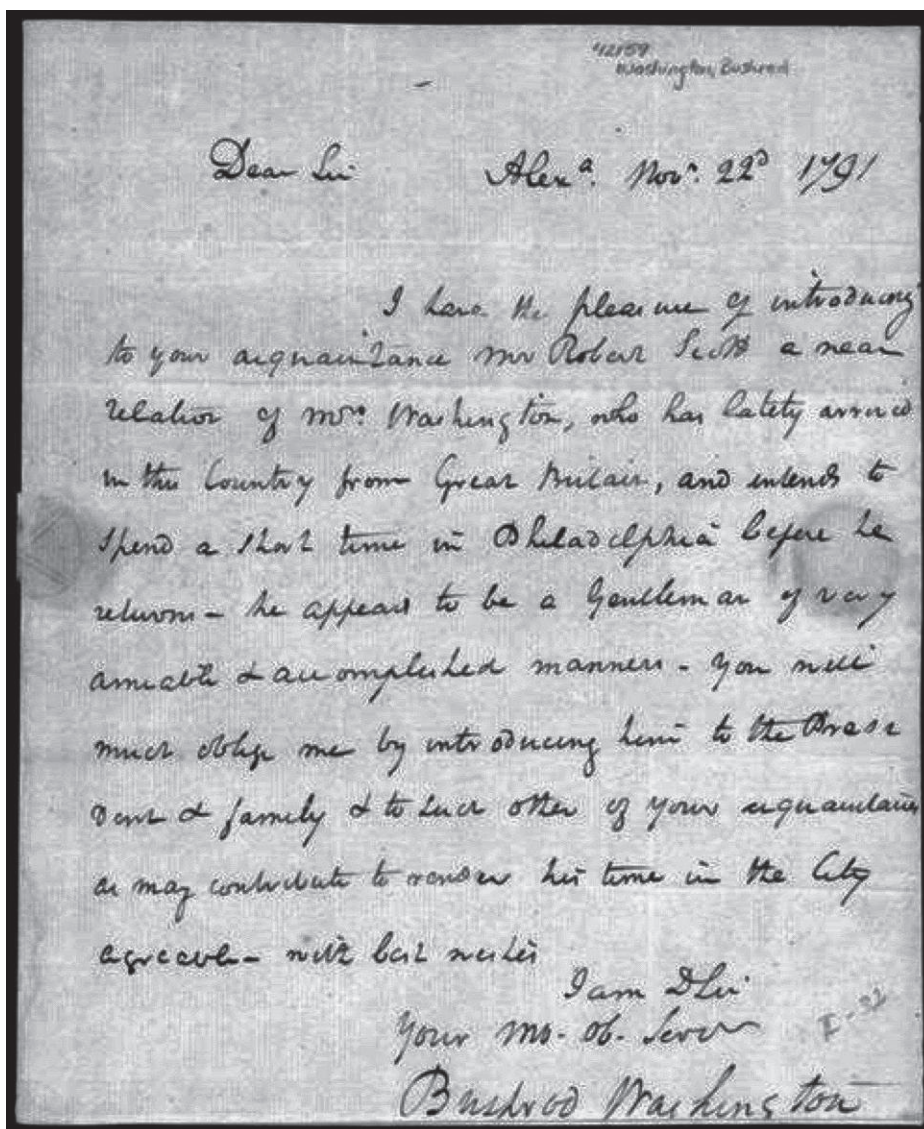


**Figure 5.** Virginia Four Spanish Milled Dollars banknote of May 6, 1776, with enlargement showing ST monograms. *Courtesy of the author.*

business as a portrait and scientific plate engraver and became a highly sought-after artist.<sup>11</sup> There were about a dozen active engravers in the Philadelphia area in 1781. Some of the lesser-known engravers were in business only for a short duration, or did their work as a supplement to their other artistic endeavors. Scot proved to be a magnificent engraver and much favored mentor for aspiring artists. His skill level is best exemplified by a battlefield map, *Investment of York and Gloucester*, which depicted the decisive battle of the American Revolution. In this engraving, Scot included an image of the American flag for the first time on a map.<sup>12</sup> Another of Scot's masterpieces was an engraving of the frontispiece for *Ahiman Rezon*, a book which contained the rules, duties, prayers, songs, and the fundamental philosophy

<sup>11</sup> Nyberg 2015: 57.

<sup>12</sup> Nyberg 2015: Gallery of Images.



**Figure 6.** Letter from President Washington's nephew, Bushrod Washington, addressed to the President's personal secretary Tobias Lear. *Courtesy of William Reese Company, New Haven, CT.*

of Freemasonry. Although Scot was a Master Mason adept at engraving scientific drawings, maps, geometric shapes, and heraldry, his engraving of animals showed unfamiliarity with the subjects. Scot (and some of his apprentices) initially had difficulty with eagles, but eventually learned to engrave good representations on federal stamps and the heraldic eagle coinage in later years.

Scot also engraved numerous seal dies throughout his career, which were used to validate official documents. He became the preferred engraver of federal seals by a wide margin, as he executed the die for the first Great Seal of the United States in 1782.<sup>13</sup> He also executed dies for the College of William and Mary in 1783, the Department of the Navy in 1798, and the State Department in 1802.

<sup>13</sup> Nyberg 2015: 50.

In the period from the mid-1780s until about 1793, Scot and his apprentices were inundated with engraving contracts for currency, seals, and scientific copper plate engraving for William Nicholson's *Natural Philosophy* and Dobson's *Encyclopædia*. Also, Scot may have taken a short trip to Great Britain, returning in November 1791. A man named Robert Scott is mentioned in a November 22, 1791, letter written by Bushrod Washington (George Washington's nephew) to the President's personal secretary Tobia Lear (Fig. 6, above). In the letter, Bushrod mentions Mr. Scott's recent return from Great Britain and requests that Mr. Lear pay special attention to him prior to his formal introduction to the President.

On November 23, 1793, Scot was appointed Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint at Philadelphia by the Mint Director, David Rittenhouse. His appointment was advocated by Thomas Jefferson out of necessity, due to the untimely death of one of his apprentices, the First Engraver of the U.S. Mint, Joseph Wright, Jr. There were few others in America at the time who had the level of skill that Scot had as a die-sinker and engraver. Congress refused to hire a European company, so Scot got the job almost by default. What role that Scot's exceedingly successful engraving business and apparent short trip to Europe may have played in recusing him from consideration for the First Mint Engraver position remains to be seen.

### **Joseph Wright Jr., First Engraver of the U.S. Mint**

Joseph Wright, Jr. was the first American-born student at the Royal Academy of Art in London, the first artist to sculpt a bust of George Washington, and the first to assume the position of Engraver of the U.S. Mint in 1792. He was probably born in Bordentown, NJ, and was an accomplished portrait painter. He was trained in England by American-born artist and President of the Royal Academy of London, Benjamin West.<sup>14</sup> These interactions with West early in his career (ca. 1773) surely helped him to get accepted into the Royal Academy when he applied in 1775. Wright traveled to France in 1781 and used a recommendation letter from West to meet Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, painter to the King of France. While in France, he stayed at the residence of Benjamin Franklin for several months. In 1782, after much insistence from British commissioner Richard Oswald, who wanted a painting of Franklin, the American polymath reluctantly sat for Wright.

Wright returned to America in 1783, and was later introduced to General Washington who—probably with some encouragement from the General's friend, Patience Wright (Joseph's mother)—sat for young Joseph. In the fall of 1783 he painted Washington in oil on panel and executed a plaster mold or life mask, as well as a clay bust. In 1784, Wright sculpted an impressive plaster oval relief of Washington, currently owned by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.<sup>15</sup> An oft-repeated tale states that in 1784, Wright attended New York City's Trinity Chapel where President Washington was also in attendance. Apparently, "the sermon fell upon deaf ears, for Wright, armed with crayon and paper, passed the time of service in drawing a profile portrait of Washington, quite without the knowledge of his involuntary sitter." From this crayon drawing he made an etching which Baker calls "probably the first ever executed by a painter in this country...For one, I am quite ready to acknowledge Joseph Wright as the first American etcher, and the portrait of George Washington as our first simon-pure etching."<sup>16</sup> Although this is a slight overstatement, Wright's etched portrait of Washington was printed on a small card and published the same year with copies distributed widely in England. This same portrait appears on the "Twigg Medal" (Baker-65) and the Manly medals (Baker-61 and -62).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Fabian 1985: 22.

<sup>15</sup> Fabian 1985: 113.

<sup>16</sup> Hitchcock 1886: 14–16.

<sup>17</sup> Rulau and Fuld 1999: 65–66.



Wright relocated from Philadelphia to New York in April 1786. During this time he developed his skills as a master painter, and produced most of his famous paintings. In the winter of 1790, Wright moved back to Philadelphia with his wife and children. Shortly after his arrival, Wright continued his training with Scot in the art of die-sinking and engraving. Wright and Shallus collaborated on a 1790 drypoint etching of Washington on which the inscription reads "J. Wright Pinx t FS" (Fig. 7). "Pinx t" is an abbreviation for the Latin verb *pinxit*, which means "he painted." The bottom half of the letter S for Shallus is weak, but clearly legible with minimal magnification. We also see a possible capital S for Scot in the curl of the ribbon on which G. WASHINGTON. is etched. Collaborations like this one between Scot's apprentices Wright and Shallus strongly point toward a collaborative effort within the Philadelphia art guild.

Around the time the U.S. Mint was established by an act of Congress on April 2, 1792, Scot and his apprentices were flooded with copper plate orders for the *Encyclopædia*.<sup>18</sup> Fabian wrote, "[Joseph] Wright, in cooperation with Thomas Jefferson, may have begun his work in the realm of national numismatics at about this time."<sup>19</sup> These facts may help explain why Wright was favored over the older and more skilled Scot. As the story goes, early in his presidency, Washington

and Secretary of State Jefferson, diligently sought after talented European engravers to design the first U.S. coins. However, they failed in this endeavor and ultimately decided in the second half of 1792 that Mint Director Rittenhouse should appoint Wright, a favorite of Washington and Franklin, as the Engraver of the nascent Philadelphia Mint. In August 1793, Wright was also designated as the Mint's "First Draughtsman & Diesinker." He was responsible for the Liberty Cap designs on both the half and large cents. These designs were based upon the obverse of the *Libertas Americana* medal, which Wright is widely believed to have designed. He was also the designer and engraver of the 1792 Wright Quarter, a pattern struck in copper and white metal.<sup>20</sup> Wright died prematurely at the age of 37 during the 1793 Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic. Unfortunately, the precise identities of some of the other early coin and medal designers and engravers in Mint history are largely unknown.

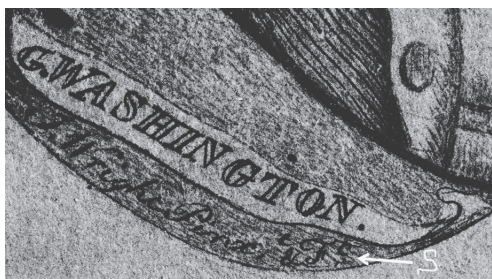
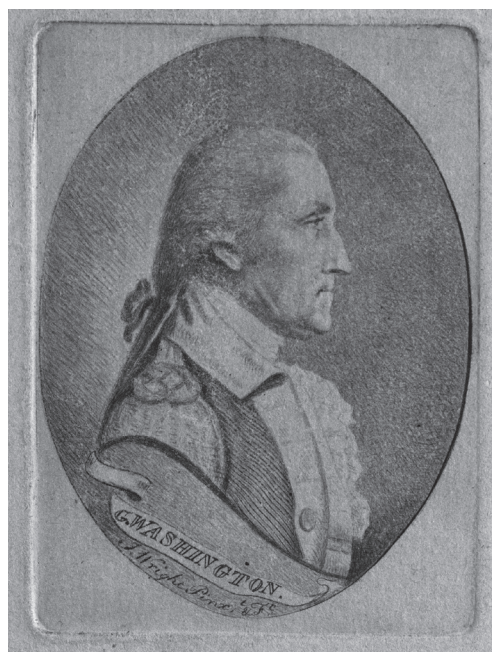


Figure 7. George Washington, 1790. Drypoint etching by Joseph Wright Jr. with enlargement showing S for Shallus. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY).

<sup>18</sup> Nyberg 2015: 81.

<sup>19</sup> Fabian 1985: 59.

<sup>20</sup> See [http://www.coinfacts.com/patterns/1792\\_patterns/1792\\_quarter\\_dollar\\_judd12.htm](http://www.coinfacts.com/patterns/1792_patterns/1792_quarter_dollar_judd12.htm).

**Case Studies of Representative Silver Oval Washington Indian Peace Medals*****1792 Chief Red Jacket Medal (Buffalo Historical Society), large size - 127 x 171 mm***

In March and April of 1792, forty-seven chiefs representing the Iroquois Confederacy (the Six Nations—Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora, and Mohawk tribes) arrived in Philadelphia to meet with President Washington, the Secretary of War Henry Knox, and the Governor of Pennsylvania Thomas Mifflin. One Indian who took the most prominent part in these conferences was the celebrated Seneca orator, Sagoyewatha, or Red Jacket. He was given a large-sized medal dated 1792 (Fig. 8, below). Red Jacket valued his medal very highly, and wore it on many occasions. Upon his death in 1839, the medal became the property of his nephew, Sosewah, or Chief James Johnson, and when he died it passed to Donehogawa or Door Keeper, better known as U.S. Army General Ely S. Parker.<sup>21</sup> In 1891, Parker wrote the medal was evidence of "the bond of perpetual peace and friendship established and entered into between the people of the United States and the Six Nations of Indians at the time of its presentation."<sup>22</sup> The medal was eventually purchased from Parker's widow in 1898 by the Buffalo Historical Society where it remains today.

*Obverse:* Numerous letters E and F can be found hidden in the Indian's headdress (Fig. 8a, below). It is unclear at this time what the 'E' denotes. The F initial marks are believed to be those of Shallus who was hired by Scot as an assistant in 1792. Two of Trenchard's J initials can be found by the ear and at the top of the tallest feather. It is possible the J could be a first initial of (James) Thackara or (Joseph) Richardson.

Wright engraved the detail on Washington's coat and sleeve using his signature cross-hatching with hidden JJW initials (Fig. 8b, below). Similar cross-hatching without the initials can be found near the farmer guiding the plow.

At the base of the tree trunk, there is a section that is very distinctive looking and different from the other line cuts of the tree (Fig. 8c, below). In this area, JT initials (Trenchard) and extremely clear FS initials (Shallus) can be identified.

*Reverse:* Arguably, the most obvious of the hidden initials on this piece are those of Scot. A prominent ST can be found in the inverted US in PLURIBUS (Fig. 8d). The method by which the base of the U turns atypically to the left to form the left tail of the capital T makes it distinct. This is the first known report of Scot using a pseudonym. The ST initials may also be an amalgamation of the Scottish freemasonry's tau cross and the lower part of the chi-rho symbol.<sup>23</sup> The eagle's eye is cut into a C-shape, similar to that on the Chief Farmer's Brother medal (Fig. 9e, below) and a 1792 medal in the American Numismatic Society (Fig. 12c, below). This same shape is also found in the clouds of the two known silver oval medals hallmarked JW (Figs. 10 and 11, below). The meaning of this C-shape is unclear at this time. The upper part of the beak has a unique semicircular shape cut similar to a reverse J. It is unknown if this is an initial, other symbol, or just an artifact. To the right of the J is the letter A that we suspect is an initial for Allardice. The Chief Farmer's Brother medal has a very similar letter A hidden in the eagle's tail feathers (Fig. 9, below).

21 Belden 1927: 13–16.

22 Ely S. Parker. Letter dated March 9, 1891. Published in the *Geneva [NY] Gazette*, March 18, 1891. See <http://www.pbs.org/warrior/content/timeline/circle/mulberrySt.html>.

23 On these symbols see <http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/masonic-apron-rosette.html> and <http://kahalyahweh.net/Articles/chirho.htm>





**Figure 8.** 1792 Chief Red Jacket (Joseph Richardson Jr.) George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal. 127 x 171 mm. Belden Plate 2A; Prucha 23–24; Baker 174P. *Courtesy of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society (Buffalo, NY).*

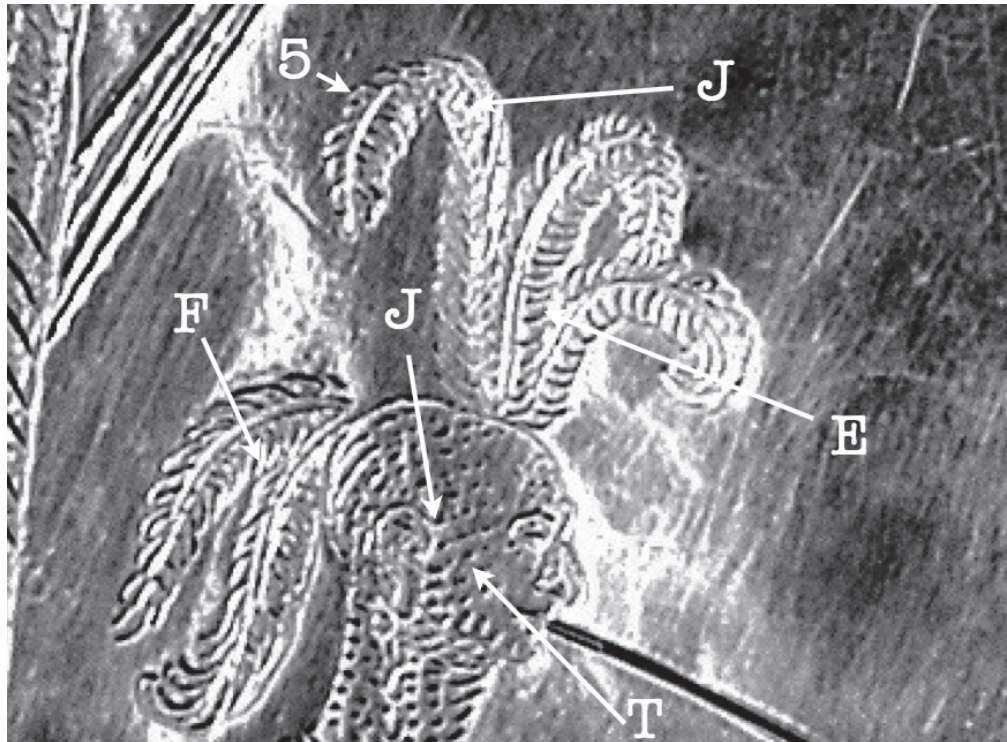


Figure 8a. Enlargement showing F, J, E, and T initials in headdress and head of Indian.

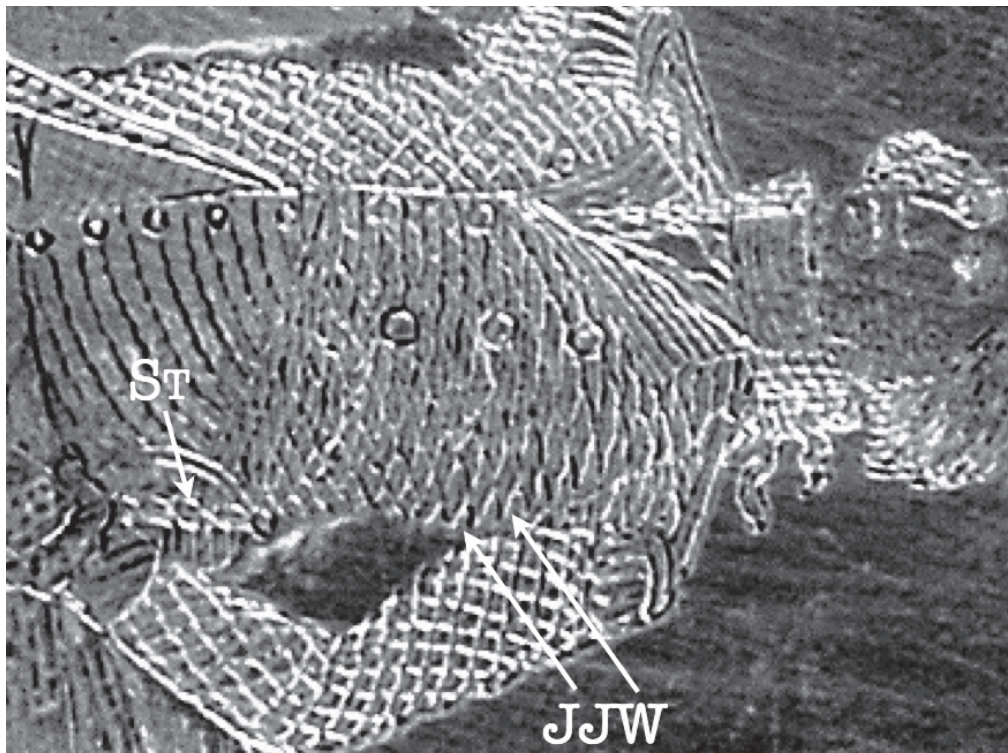


Figure 8b. Enlargement showing ST and JJW initials in Washington's jacket.



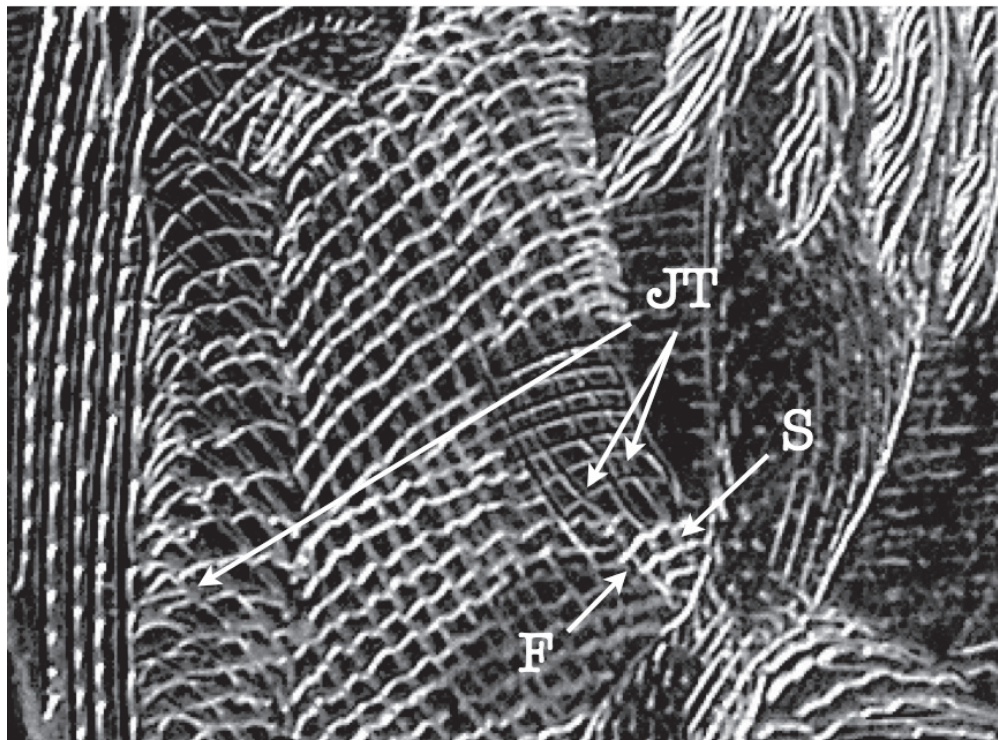


Figure 8c. Enlargement showing JT, S, and F initials in tree.



Figure 8d. Enlargement showing ST initials in PLURIBUS.

Believed to be unique to both the Chief Red Jacket medal and the Chief Farmer's Brother medal, the identical wire-style line engraving of the eagle's talons, has a striking resemblance to the talon engraving used for Trenchard's famous Great Seal (Fig. 4, above). A letter V, believed to be the initial of Vallance, or possibly Henry Voigt who a year later, in 1793, became the Chief Coiner at the U.S. Mint can also be seen. This V is similar to the V found on the break of the laurel branch stem on Washington's famous "Dorsett" Great Seal currently on display at Mount Vernon. The initials WJJ can be seen clearly on the eagle's head and are without question those of Wright. We believe the R and the J initials found are those of Richardson and represent the first hidden marks documented for him. Note that the style of the R is quite different from his hallmarked letter R found on a few oval medals and other fine silver pieces. The letter T with the adjacent R probably belong to Trenchard. Trenchard used another set of hidden initials, JT, which are very prominent and cannot be mistaken for anyone else other than possibly his son-in-law, James Thackara.

**1792 Chief Farmer's Brother Medal (Ontario Historical Society), small size – 81 x 124 mm**

This medal (Fig. 9, below) was given to the well-known Seneca Chief, Farmer's Brother who was part of the delegation that accompanied Chief Red Jacket to Philadelphia in 1792 (Fig. 8, above). Belden wrote, "While the current histories of this meeting in Philadelphia, in 1792, do not mention the bestowal of other medals, it is more than likely that others, beside Red Jacket, were favored. Farmer's Brother [Seneca] is known to have possessed a medal<sup>24</sup> and, as he was one of the chiefs, representing his tribe at this time, and his medal bears the same date, he probably received it at the same time. There are other medals also dated 1792 which may or may not have been given then."<sup>25</sup>

This medal is equally superb in quality to the Chief Red Jacket medal. Based on the hidden initials found on the obverse and reverse, the main artist of this medal was Scot. Acid engraving was used to make parts of the medal appear nearly three-dimensional. This technique was used in the negative space and the area above the eagle. Coin historians have noted similar techniques on early American coins, and on all U.S. Government seals made by Scot and his Philadelphia-based engravers guild.

*Obverse:* Virtually the entire trunk is engraved with cipher symbols in a mathematical code that may have been known only to the engraver. Just below Washington's cuff, we see a prominent mark by Scot, ST (Fig. 9a). Just below the ST we find an F for Shallus. The farmer guiding the plow in the background reveals a crisp V, likely the initial of Vallance. On the back of the farmer's leg, we see a rather fine large T with a smaller J set to the right, possibly the initials of Trenchard. Within Washington's left epaulette we find an E. The meaning of this letter is currently unknown (Fig. 9b). The engraving of smoke from the Indian's calumet reveals an S for Scot and a JT for Trenchard. Surrounding the stem of the calumet we also find an ST.

*Reverse:* The eagle engraving style is nearly identical to that of the silver oval 1792 medal currently held by the American Numismatic Society (Fig. 12, below). The engraving of the feet using wire cuts and the feathers are certainly reminiscent of, if not identical to, those on Trenchard's eagle for the *Columbian Magazine* in 1786 (Fig. 4, above).

Two letter As (probably for Allardice) and an F (Shallus) can be found on the right talon and leg, respectively (Fig. 9c, below). Another prominent F can be found on the left talon and a series of As within the tail feathers. An apparent JT is also present (Fig. 9d, below). On the eagle's head there is a JT and as part of the E in E PLURIBUS UNIM we find a JL, possibly representing the

<sup>24</sup> William L. Stone. *Life and Times of Red Jacket or Sa-go-ye-wat-ha* (New York, 1841): 418.

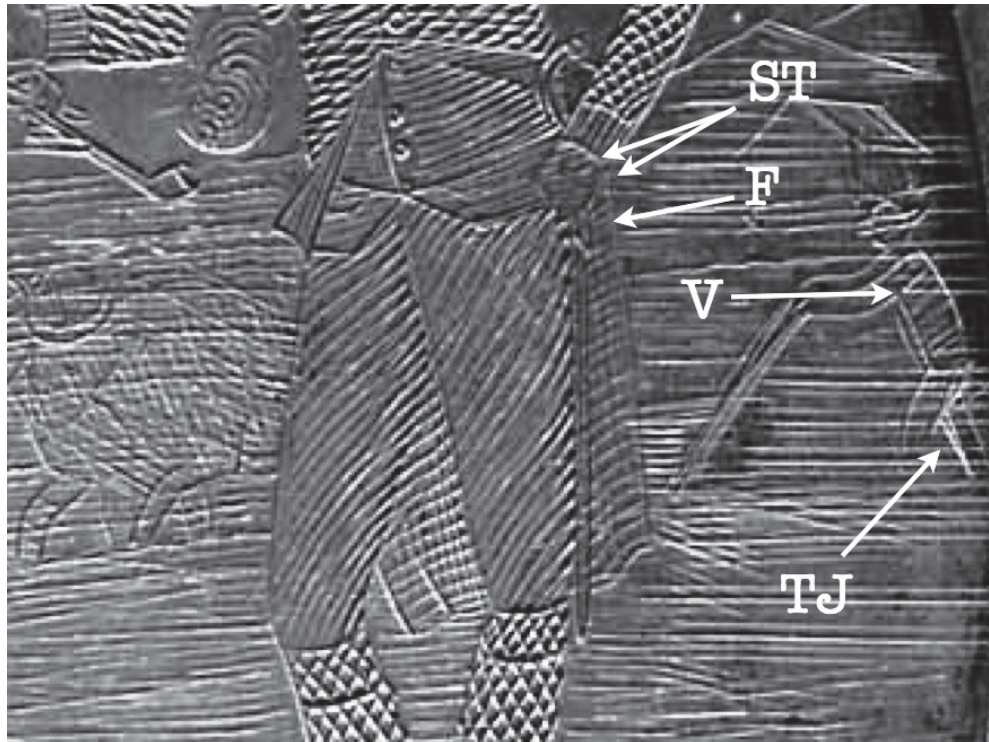
<sup>25</sup> Belden 1927: 13–16.



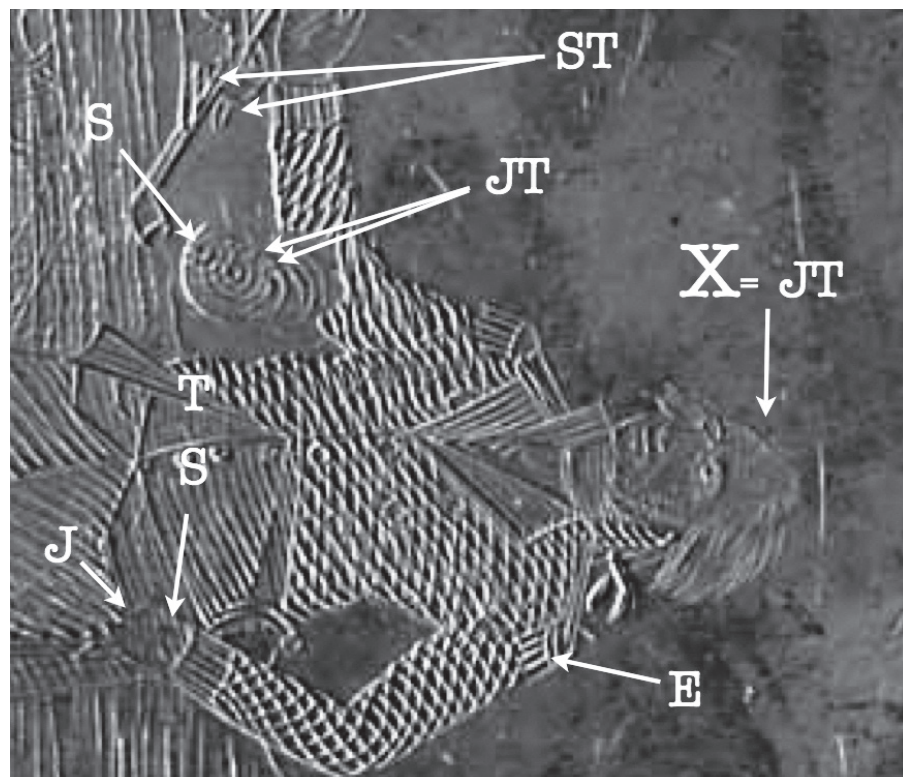


**Figure 9.** 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal. Given to Seneca Chief Farmer's Brother in Philadelphia, PA. 81 x 124 mm. Belden Plate 2C. *Courtesy of the Ontario County Historical Society (Canandaigua, NY).*





**Figure 9a.** Enlargement showing ST, F, V, and TJ initials in Washington's jacket and farmer.



**Figure 9b.** Enlargement showing E, J, JT, S, ST, and X initials.

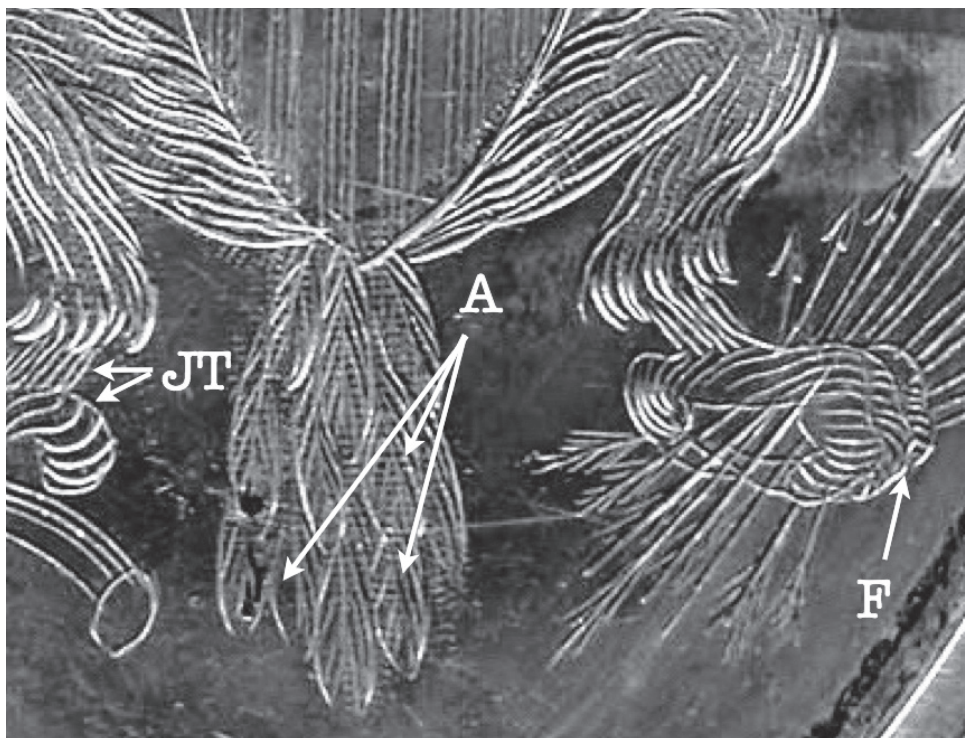


Figure 9c. Enlargement showing A, F, and JT initials on eagle.

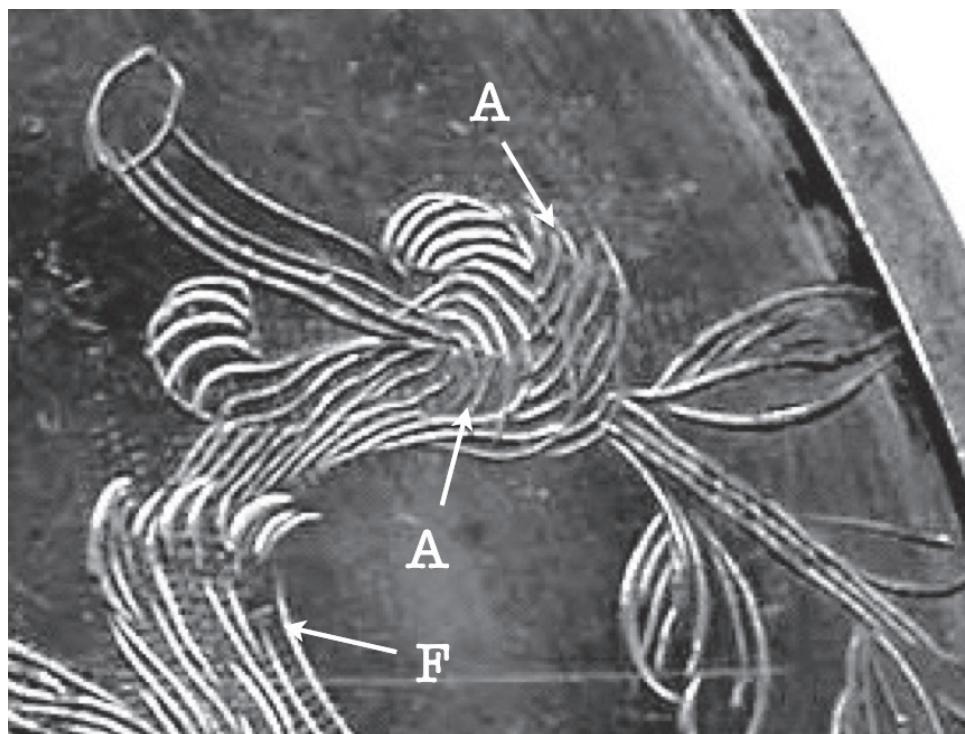


Figure 9d. Enlargement showing A and F initials on eagle's leg and talons.





**Figure 9e.** Enlargement showing JL, JT, and ST initials on eagle's head and in E PLURIBUS UNUM.

same engraver responsible for the few known oval medals hallmarked with the same initials (Fig. 9e, below). In the last of PLURIBUS, we see a very large ST.

**1792 Joseph Wright Jr. (JW) Medal (Woolaroc Museum), small size – 83 x 127 mm**

Currently on display at the Woolaroc Museum in Bartlesville, OK,<sup>26</sup> this silver oval medal was excavated by Frazier E. Wilson on April 17, 1933 near the site of the Battle of Wabash in western Ohio, which occurred on November 4, 1791 (Figs. 10 and 10a, below). It was purchased from Wilson's estate by Norman Tazwell in the 1940s and displayed in the Museum of Archaic Man in Red Rock, MO, until 1950 when it entered into private hands. It was owned by the Shillington family until 1983 when it was purchased by Joseph T. Hajek, a dealer in Winsted, CT, in 1984.<sup>27</sup> This medal was engraved by the first Engraver of the US Mint and Die Sinker and Coiner, Joseph Wright Jr. and others in the engravers guild of Scot. This medal has a clear hallmark stamp of JW. This hallmark is indisputably identical to that found on the drum in the 1793 painting by Wright, of himself and his family (Fig. 14, below). The only other numismatic or exnumia item with the identical hallmark is the silver oval 1792 New York-Wright medal (Fig. 11, below) currently in private hands. In his discussion of the medal, Fuld misidentified the engraver as Joseph Wyatt of Philadelphia. While Joseph Wyatt did have a similar J.W. hallmark, his mark is made distinct from Wright's by its upright block lettering with strong periods following each letter. Further, Joseph Wyatt was confirmed to have worked as a goldsmith in London up until 1790, but did not resurface in the public record until 1797, when he opened a silversmith shop in the Callowhill neighborhood of Philadelphia.

The precise timing of the engraving of the small size silver oval 1792 (and other year's) medals is not known, but due to the substandard engraving quality of this piece and other genuine pieces,

<sup>26</sup> See [www.woolaroc.org](http://www.woolaroc.org).

<sup>27</sup> Fuld 2012: 62.

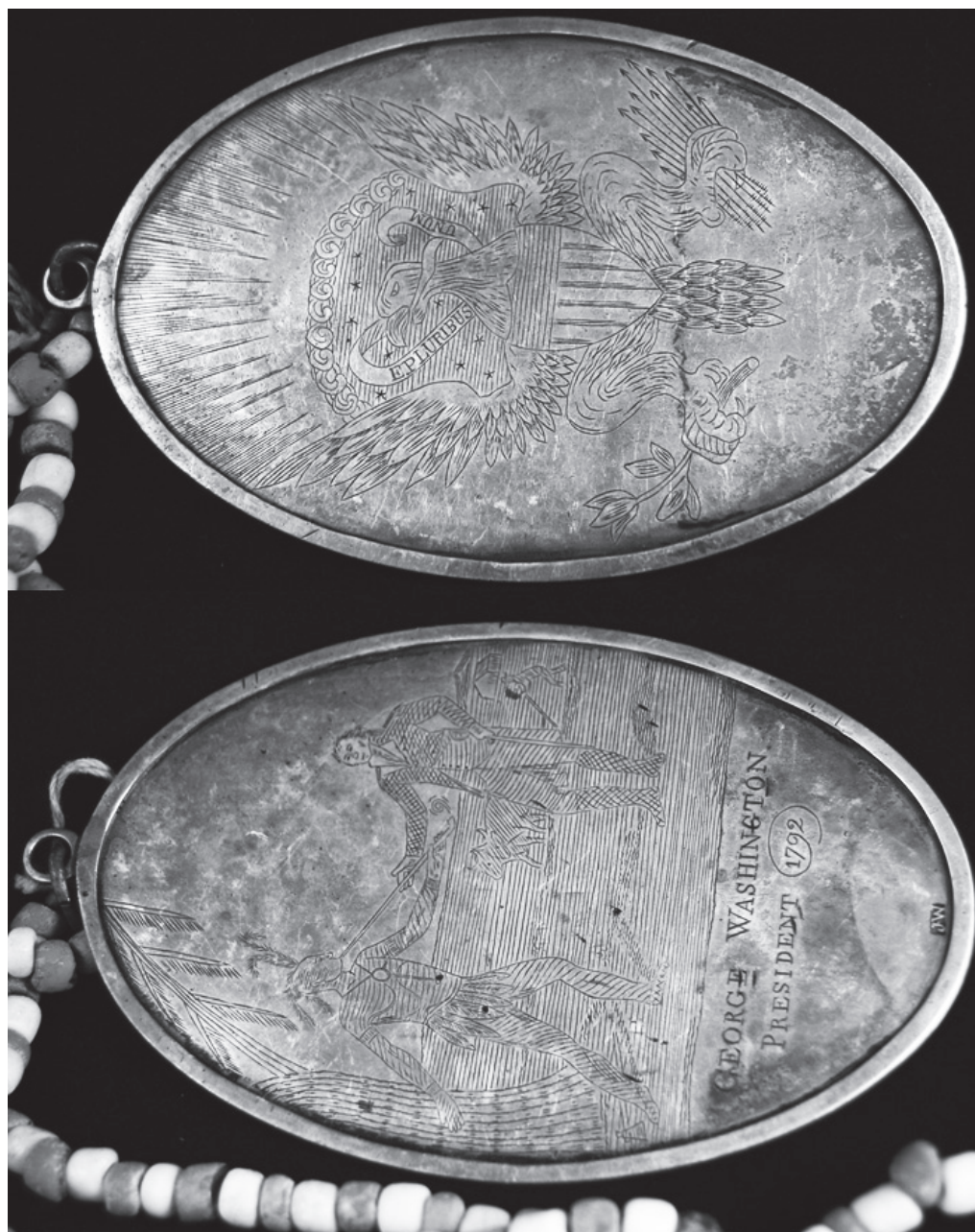


Figure 10. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Wright). 77 x 125 mm. Belden Plate 4C. Courtesy of the Woolaroc Museum (Bartlesville, OK).

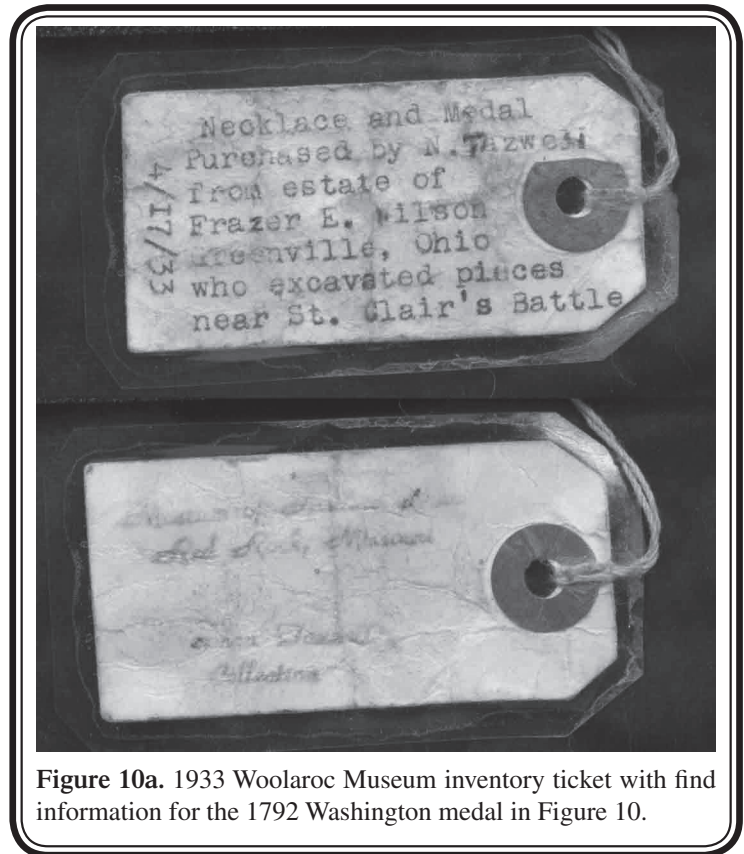


it is likely that Wright and Scot engraved this medal in haste due to the large number requested by Secretary of War Knox, as well as the fact that Scot and his apprentices were inundated in 1791 through 1793 by the large order of copper plates requested by Dobson for his *Encyclopædia*. Scot's two known hallmarked silver oval medals show that he lacked experience in his work, was not trained to the same skill level as other Scot apprentices, and could not get much assistance from Scot who was not skilled in animal engraving.<sup>28</sup> Wright was inundated with the burgeoning American publishing business, and may have just returned from a short trip to Great Britain. All of this notwithstanding, the historical value and importance of Wright's two known JW hallmarked pieces

is still obvious. The silver oval 1792 Woolaroc and New York medals by Wright represent the earliest known surviving and identifiable hand-cut relics by an employee of the new U.S. Mint. By contrast, the first circulating coins produced by the U.S. Mint were 11,178 copper cents delivered in March 1793.

**Obverse:** Distinct JJW (Joseph Wright, Jr.) initials are prevalent throughout the cross-hatching used on Washington (Fig. 10b, below). The smoke coming from the calumet appears as a numeral 9 (identical to that found on the 1792 New York medal, Fig. 11, below). It is unclear why the engraver chose the number nine, but it is plausible there may be a reference to the Nine of Diamonds, also called the Curse of Scotland. Hidden on the rim at 4 o'clock on both this medal (Fig. 10c, below) and the New York medal (Fig. 11c, below), we can just barely discern Scot's mark, ST. Although worn from handling and age, the discovery of these initials further support the likelihood of a strong collaboration between the first two engravers of the U.S. Mint, Wright and Scot.

**Reverse:** The reverse of this medal is identical in style to the 1792 New York medal. The engraving style of the eagle's heads is cartoonish in appearance on both. The stars above the eagle are in the same locations and both show clouds with the connecting C symbolism, perhaps symbolic of the Masonic Star Gate Arch.



**Figure 10a.** 1933 Woolaroc Museum inventory ticket with find information for the 1792 Washington medal in Figure 10.

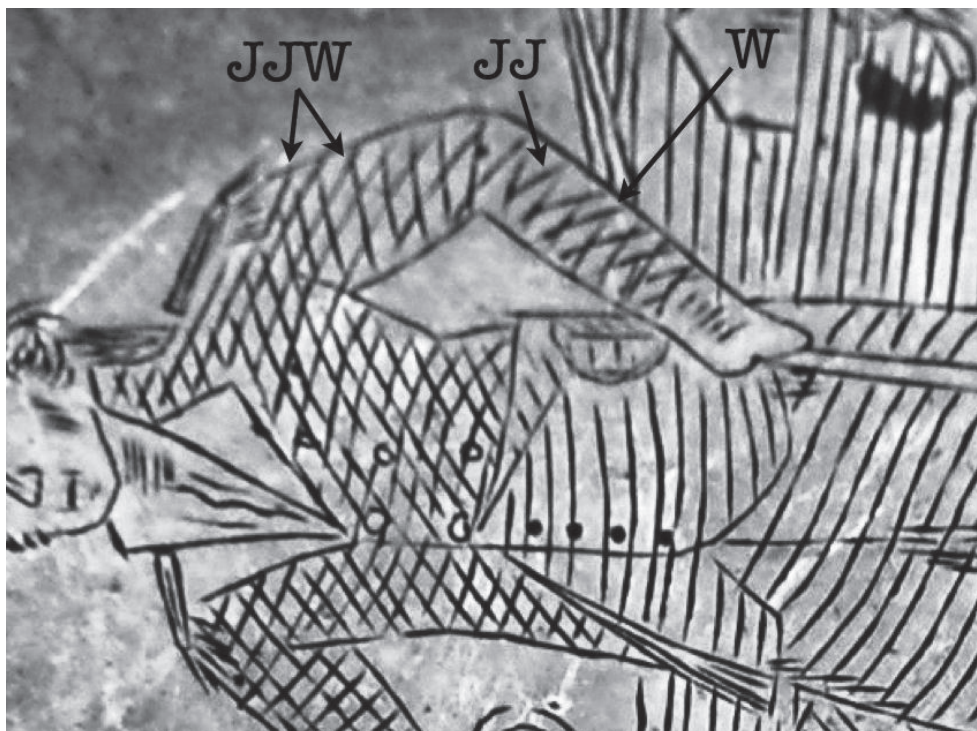


Figure 10b. Enlargement showing JJ, JJW, and W initials on Washington's sleeve.

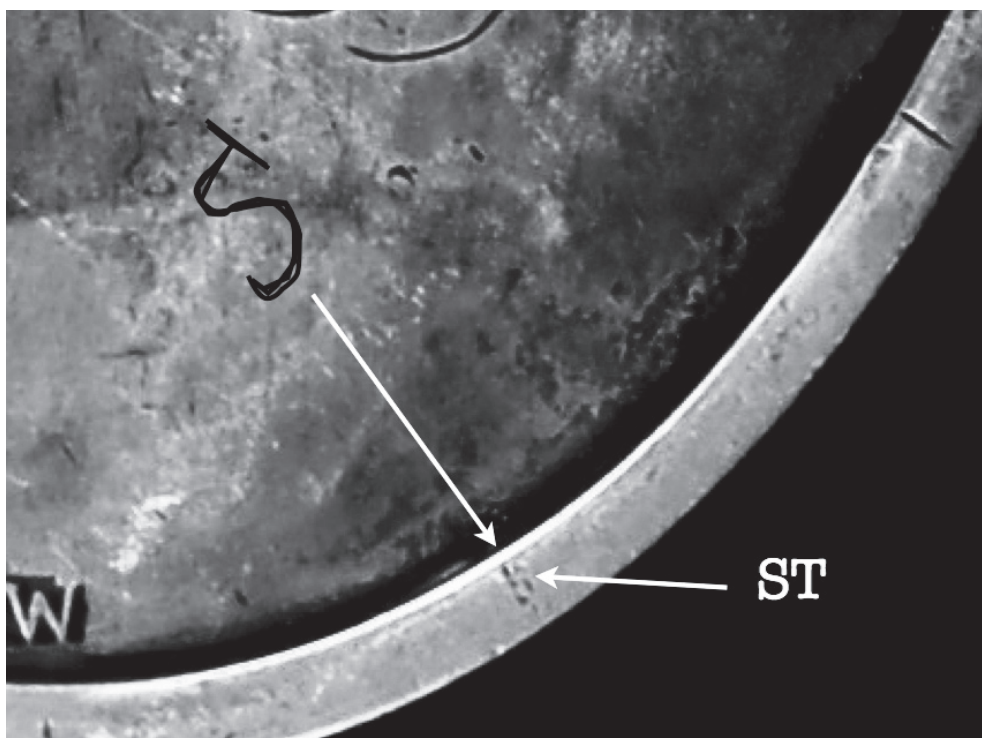


Figure 10c. Enlargement showing ST initials on rim.

**1792 Joseph Wright Jr. (JW) Medal (New York private collection), small size – 81 x 125**

Currently residing in private hands, your authors learned in 2013 that this interesting silver oval 1792 medal (Fig. 11, below) came into the possession of an octogenarian gentleman living in New York via a collection he inherited from a close friend. This gentleman informed us that his close friend “spent a lot of time in northwestern New York State.”<sup>29</sup> This medal has a stamped JW hallmark identical to that found on the 1792 Woolaroc medal, however this medal contains a worn, crude engraving of the numerals 11.91 or possibly 11.4.91 on the obverse (Fig. 11a). This is probably an ode to the most significant and pronounced Native American military victory in history at the Battle of Wabash on November 4, 1791. It remains to be determined whether there is a connection between the 11.91 on this medal and the Woolaroc, which was excavated near the same battle site.

It is unclear whether this medal or the 1792 Woolaroc medal was bestowed on one of the 47 Indian chiefs of upstate New York at the 1792 conference in Philadelphia, but the circumstantial evidence points strongly toward this possibility. Belden alludes to the probability that chiefs from the Six Nations received silver oval medals dated 1792. He described the only two 1792 Plate 4C examples he was aware of:

Two other medals of 1792 are known to the writer...One of these medals, size 81 x 124 mm, is in the collection of the American Numismatic Society. The other, size 81 x 127 mm, when last seen several years ago, belonged to a resident of New York State, whose present address is not known. Nothing is recorded regarding the original recipient of either of these two medals.<sup>30</sup>

No update on the location of this medal was provided by Fuld in 2011. It is unclear but likely, given the circumstantial evidence and nearly identical dimensions (81 x 125 mm or 132 mm including loop), that the New York medal in private hands is the same one mentioned by Belden. Fuld identified two other 1792 Plate 4C medals. One measuring 81 x 124 mm was given to a Chief Keses and was sold in the Charles H. Fisher sale in March 1936 (lot 757). Another medal measuring 80.5 x 133 mm belonged to the famous American collector F. C. C. Boyd. It was catalogued and sold in Stack's John J. Ford, Jr. sale in May 2004 for \$264,000 (lot 190).

Similarly to the 1792 Woolaroc - Wright medal, the engraving quality on this medal is not up to the standards of the large-size Chief Red Jacket medal or the Chief Farmer's Brother medal. This medal does however appear to have some wear at the center of the medal on the obverse and reverse indicative of a polishing method by Native Americans using fine sand.

*Obverse:* Distinct JJW (Joseph Wright, Jr.) initials are prevalent throughout the cross-hatching used on Washington (Fig. 11b). Again, hidden on the rim at 4 o'clock, we can just barely discern Scot's mark, 'ST' (Fig. 11c).

*Reverse:* Figure 11d clearly shows Wright's more personalized JJW on the eagle's right leg. The VJ initials are believed to be those of Vallance who apprenticed for Scot and Trenchard.

<sup>29</sup> Personal communications with owner (December 11, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> Belden 1927: 16.



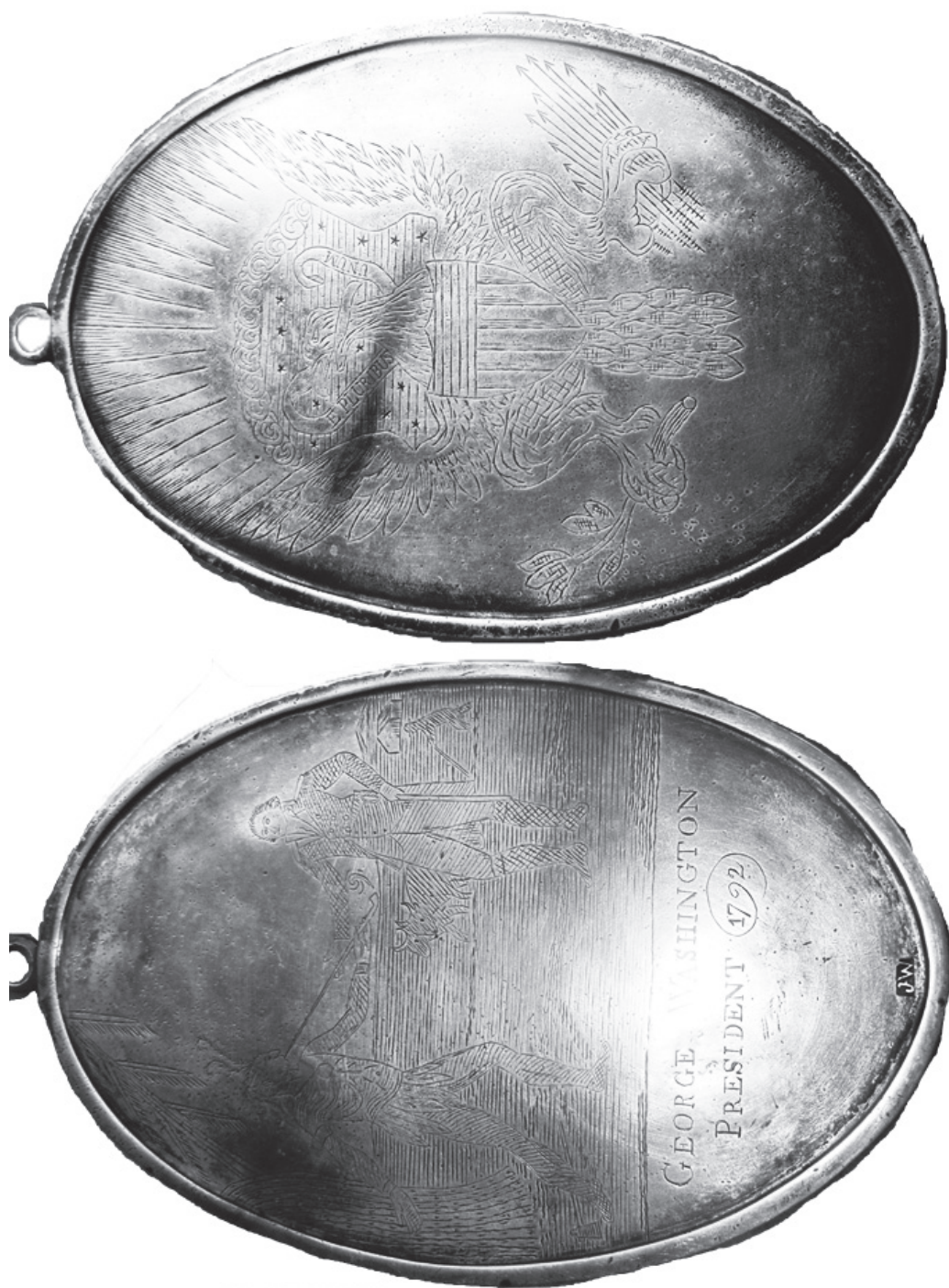


Figure 11. 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Wright). 81 x 125 mm, 72.3 g. New York private collection. *Courtesy of owner.*



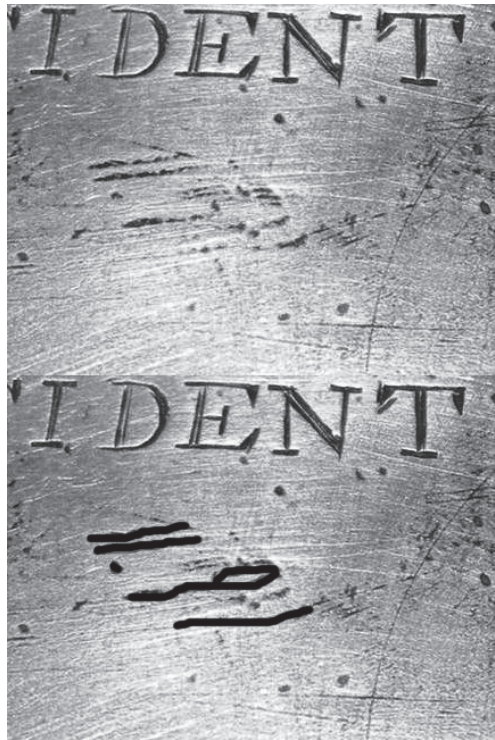


Figure 11a. Enlargement showing 11.91 on obverse.



Figure 11b. Enlargement showing 6 or 9 in smoke and JJ and W initials in Washington's sleeve.

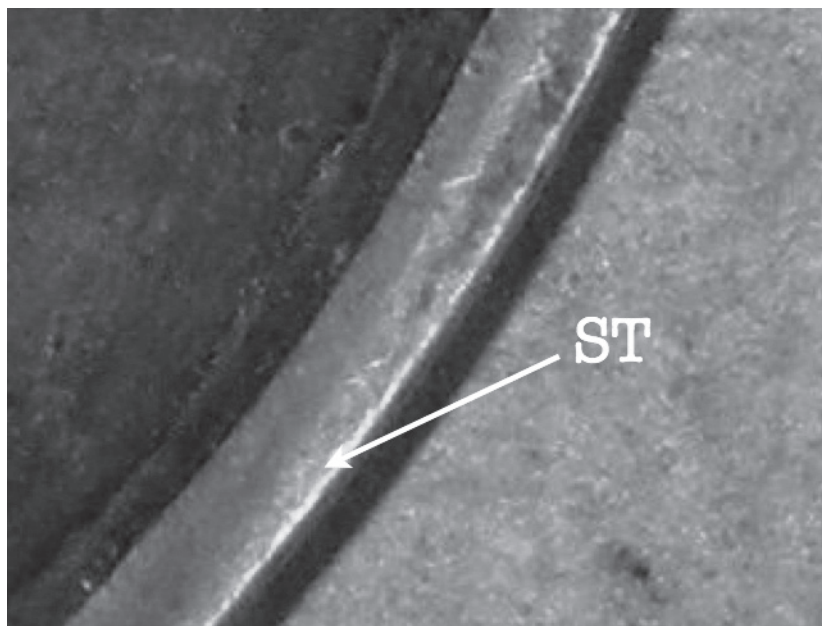


Figure 11c. Enlargement showing ST initials on rim.

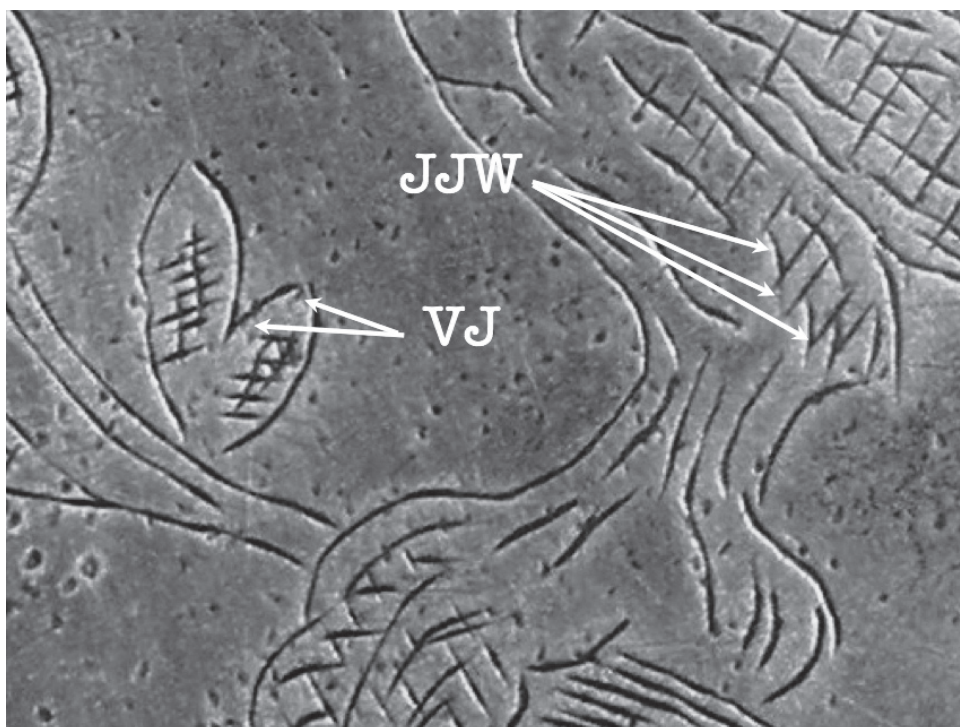


Figure 11d. Enlargement showing JJW and VJ initials in eagle's leg and leaves.

**1792 Medal (American Numismatic Society), small size – 84 x 136 mm**

This medal (Fig. 12, below) was donated to the ANS by Howland Wood and Elliott Smith on January 15, 1921. No other information is available on this medal's provenance or historical significance. It is a Belden Plate 4C variety and is cataloged as ANS 1921.23.1.

*Obverse:* The Native American's extended right hand shows three distinct sets of initials (Fig. 12a, below). We are uncertain about the meaning of the CI, but these initials have been found on the eagle's leg in Trenchard's Great Seal and the National Coat of Arms painting, which hangs adjacent to Washington's original pew in St. Paul's Chapel of Trinity Church (New York, NY). The G may be the last initial of the first employee of the U.S. Mint and famous pattern engraver, Peter Getz. Lastly, the ST just below the hand is Scot's mark. Again, we find Wright's signature clearly in the cross-hatching of Washington's coat and sleeves (Fig. 12b, below).

*Reverse:* As on Chief Red Jacket's medal, we find a distinct ST associated with the S in PLURIBUS. Interestingly, there is also a numeral 8 incorporated into the cloud engraving.

**1793 Joseph Richardson Jr. (JR) Medal (U.S. State Department), 110 x 159 mm**

This medal was gifted to the U.S. Department of State by Mrs. Mark Bortman purportedly in 1967 (Fig. 13, below). It is listed by Fuld as an authentic medium-size silver medal.<sup>31</sup>

*Obverse:* In Figure 13a we find clear marks of Trenchard (JT) and one mark for Shallus (FS). We also see the similar 9-shaped smoke from the calumet as seen on the Woolaroc medal (Fig. 10, above) and New York medal (Fig. 11, above). There is also a stray unexplained F initial on Washington's right forearm.

Wright's JJW marks can be found on Washington, and Scot's ST marks near his left hand (Fig. 13b, below). Albeit challenging to see, we find near Washington's ear the initials VJ, which are probably those of Vallance.

*Reverse:* In the plumage we find a very clear R with a J just to the left (Fig. 13c, below). These are likely to be the initials of Richardson. A very small diamond-style cut ST can be found in the furthest right cloud.

Figure 13d exquisitely captures details of the eagle design, and we find a J over the eye accompanied by a lower case r, that in theory could represent Richardson's suffix, "Jr." Scot's ST is found with a weak preceding capital T.

The shield on this medal is cut with the same design and technique as that on Chief Red Jacket's medal.

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<sup>31</sup> Fuld 2013: 59.





**Figure 12.** 1792 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal. 84 x 136 mm. Belden Plate 4C. ANS 1921.3.1. Photos courtesy of the American Numismatic Society.

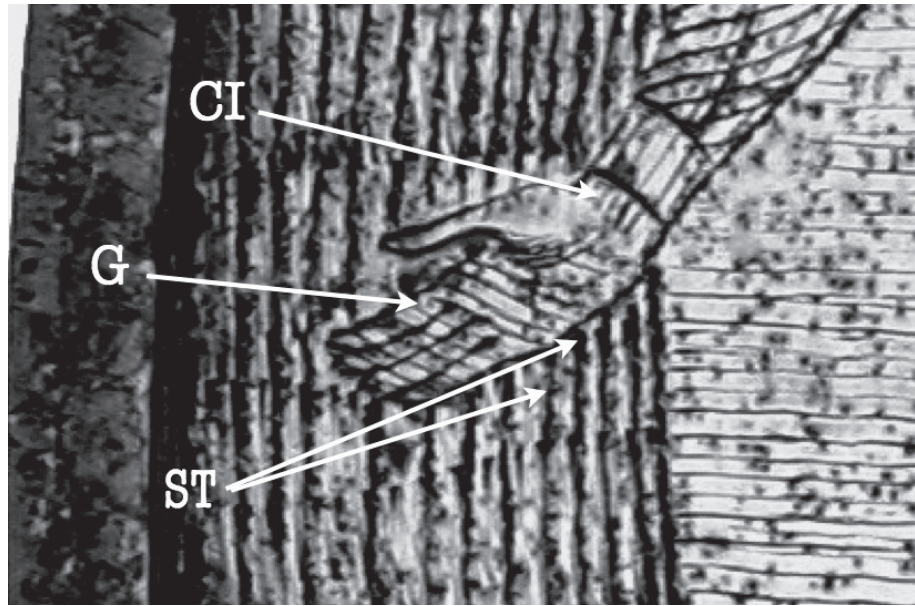


Figure 12a. Enlargement showing CI, G, and ST initials in Washington's hand and jacket.

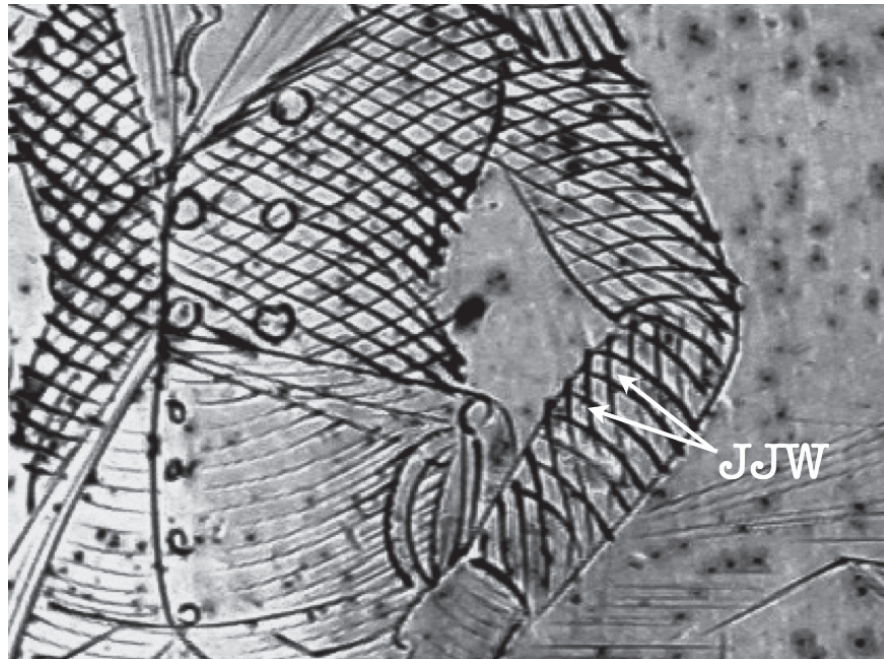


Figure 12b. Enlargement showing JJW initials in Washington's sleeve.





**Figure 13.** 1793 George Washington silver oval Indian Peace Medal (Joseph Richardson, Jr.). 110 x 159 mm. *Photography by Will Brown. Courtesy of the Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C.*



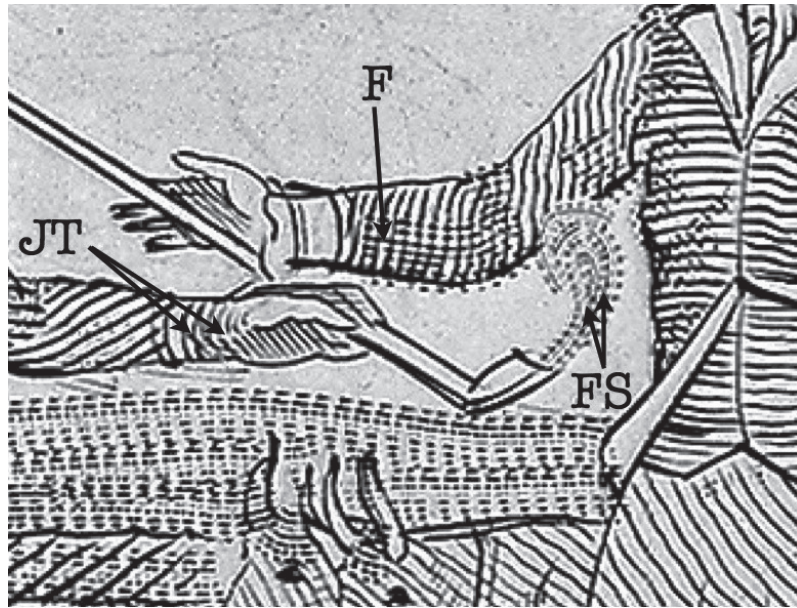


Figure 13a. Enlargement showing F, FS, and JT initials in Indian's wrist, smoke, and Washington's sleeve.

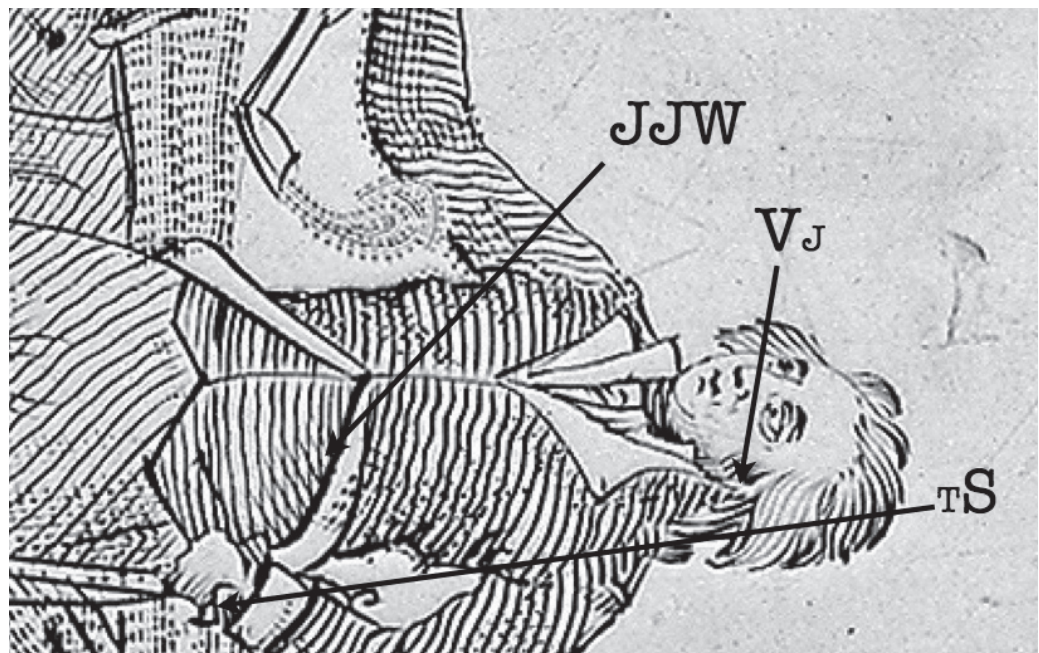


Figure 13b. Enlargement showing JJW, TS, and VJ initials on Washington.



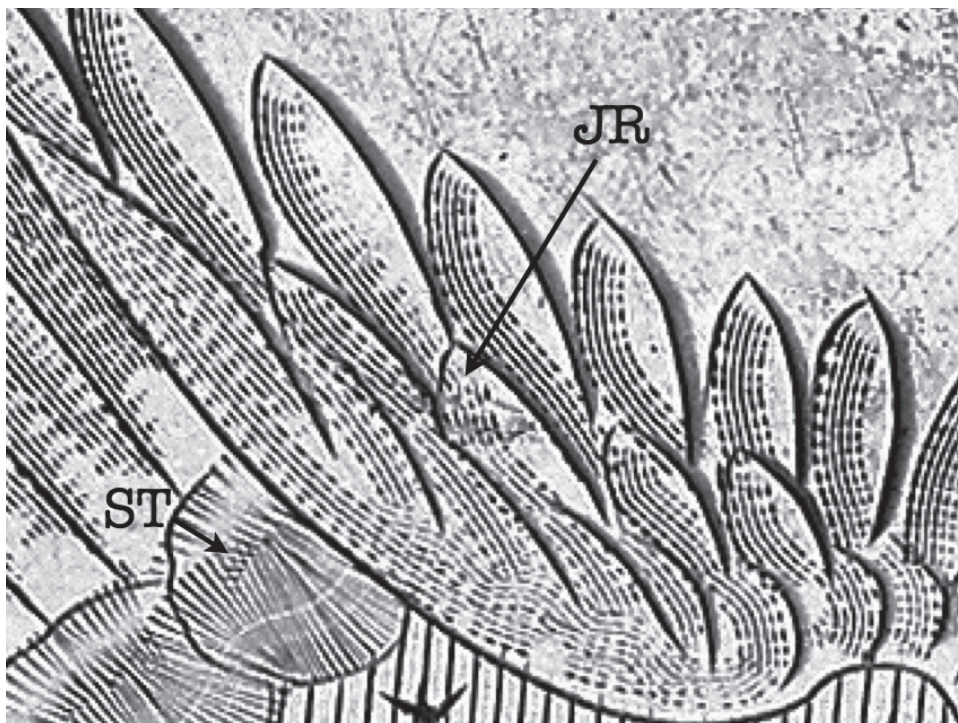


Figure 13c. Enlargement showing JR and ST initials on eagle.



Figure 13d. Enlargement showing C, J, R, and S initials on eagle.

**Hidden Initials in Selected Portraits by Joseph Wright Jr.****The Wright Family (1793), oil on canvas, unfinished**

This painting was likely Wright's last before succumbing to yellow fever in the Philadelphia outbreak of 1793 (Fig. 14, below). Wright used the drum on the floor next to his daughter to place his initials JW (Fig. 14a, below). The left-to-right angle of the JW inscription on the drum is nearly identical to that of the JW hallmark on the Woolaroc and New York 1792 Washington Indian Peace Medals (Figs. 10 and 11, above).

**YANKEE-DOODLE. or the American SATAN (ca. 1780), self-portrait**

This hand-colored etching is Wright's earliest known self-portrait and was drawn from his reflection in a mirror (Fig. 15, below). The theme of the portrait is quite interesting in that the words Wright chose "Yankee-Doodle" had been for two decades, a derisive term for an American, and "American Satan" hints at unforgivable behavior. The only known incident in the artist's early life that could be so satirized, was his exhibition at the Royal Academy in London of a portrait he did of his mother Patience Wright modeling the head of Charles I. This became quite a scandal for Wright and it was his first and last submission to a Royal Academy exhibition.<sup>32</sup>

A closer look at Wright's etching method reveals hidden JW and JJW initials on the buttons of his coat as well in the shading along the button line. In the eighteenth century, individuals who could afford buttons generally used monogrammed initials. We also see his signature cross-hatching and shading technique with hidden initials to be identical to that found on a practice board that Wright used as a shim to keep his ca. 1775 painting, *Portrait of a Lady*, in its frame (Fig. 17b, below) and clearly on a silhouette of a lady executed by Wright in 1783 (Fig. 16, below).

***Portrait of a Lady* (ca. 1775), sold by Christie's in 2005**

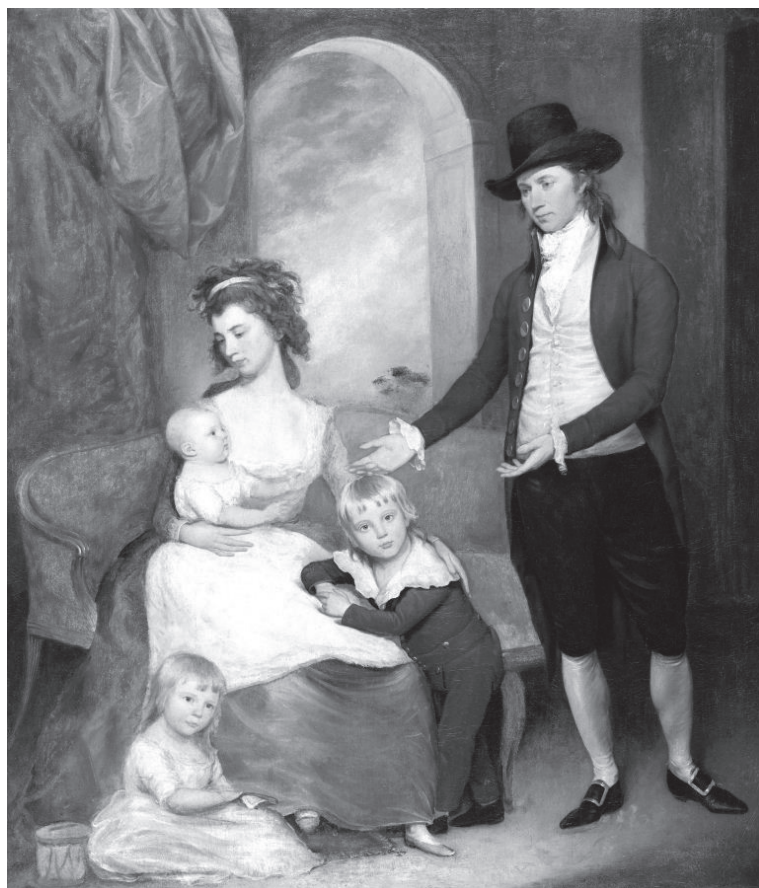
Around the date on the reverse of this painting February 2, 1775, Wright was preparing his application to the Royal Academy of London's Keeper of the Royal Schools.<sup>33</sup> Applicants were required to submit a drawing or model from a plaster cast. The Keeper must have found Wright's initial submission acceptable since he had to pass a second test, another drawing or model from a plaster cast in the possession of the Academy. On April 8, 1775, the Council of the Royal Academy admitted Wright and five others into the school of design. It appears entirely plausible that Wright used this painting during his application process (Fig. 17, below).

In this painting, Wright was consistent in leaving his JJW initials (Fig. 17a, below). Even more intriguing is the discovery by your authors of a practice board used by Wright as a shim to hold the portrait in frame (Fig. 17b, below). On this shim we find his signature cross-hatching (cf. Figs. 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13, above). When the shim was actually added to the frame cannot be determined, but it could have been during the short time he worked on the silver oval medals for the U.S. Mint. The elegant handwriting on the painting's frame (Fig. 16c, below) is identical in style and prose to a January 20, 1785 handwritten bill tendered from Wright to the U.S. Government for a bust of Washington (Fig. 18, below). Note the up-stroked stem of the lower case letter d in "modeling" and "order" indicative of a flourish or ornamental stroke. Thus, we believe the handwritten inscription was completed by Wright.

<sup>32</sup> Fabian 1985: 29.

<sup>33</sup> Fabian 1985: 29.





**Figure 14.** *The Wright Family*, 1793. Oil on canvas (unfinished). By Joseph Wright, Jr. *Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Edward S. Clarke.*



**Figure 14a.** Enlargement showing JW initials on drum.



**Figure 15.** *YANKEE-DOODLE. or the American SATAN.* Hand-colored etching. Self-portrait by Joseph Wright, Jr. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

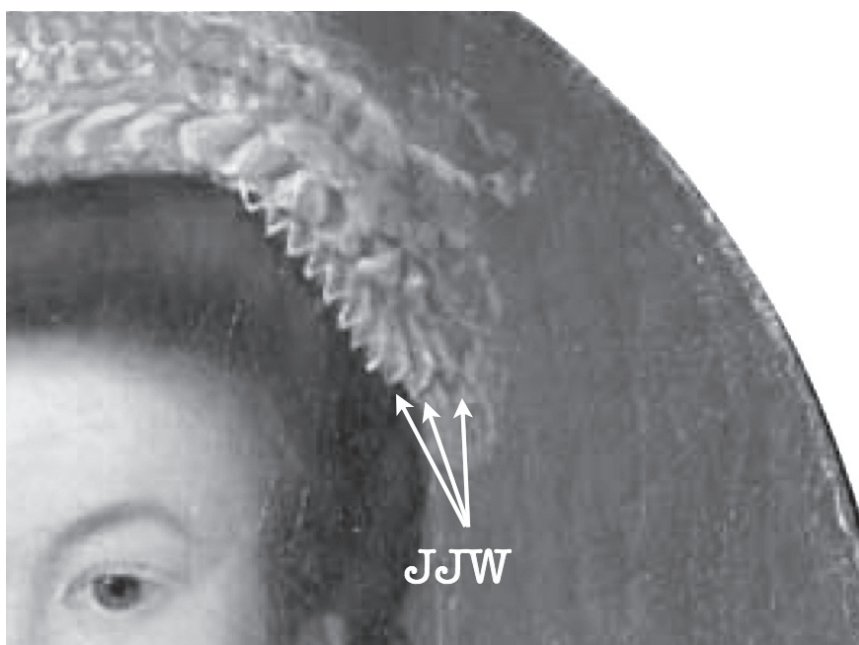


**Figure 16.** *Lady's Silhouette*, 1783. Philadelphia. Joseph Wright. Sold on eBay on September 11, 2015.





**Figure 17.** *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1775. Oil on canvas. By Joseph Wright, Jr. *Courtesy of Michael Hall at Michael Hall Antiques (Nashville, TN).*



**Figure 17a.** Enlargement showing JJW initials in bonnet.



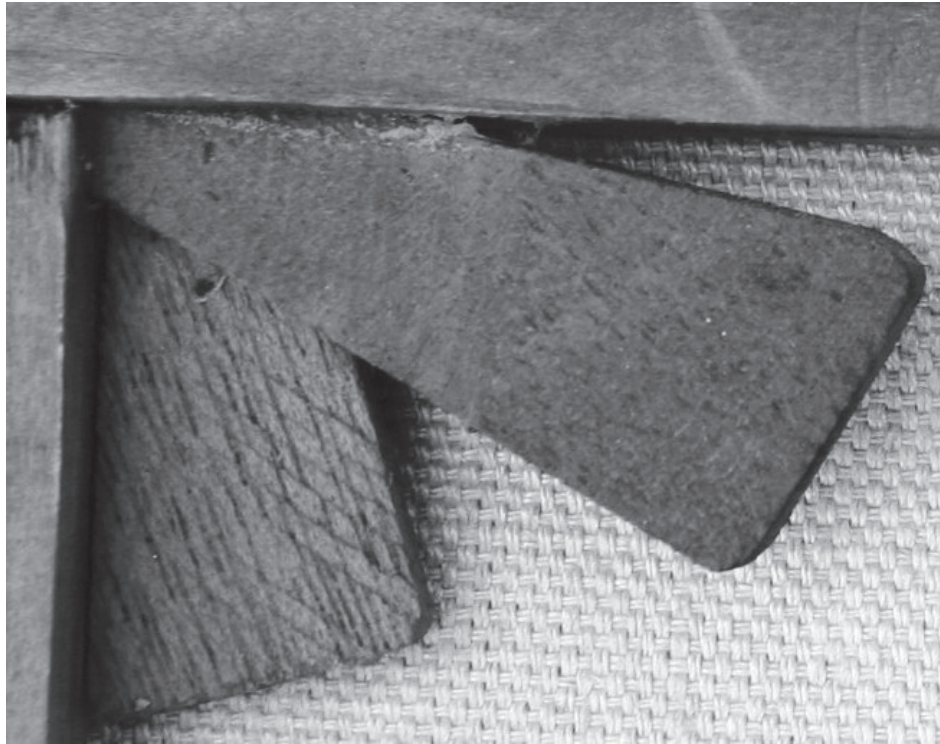


Figure 17b. Cross-hatching on shim in frame.

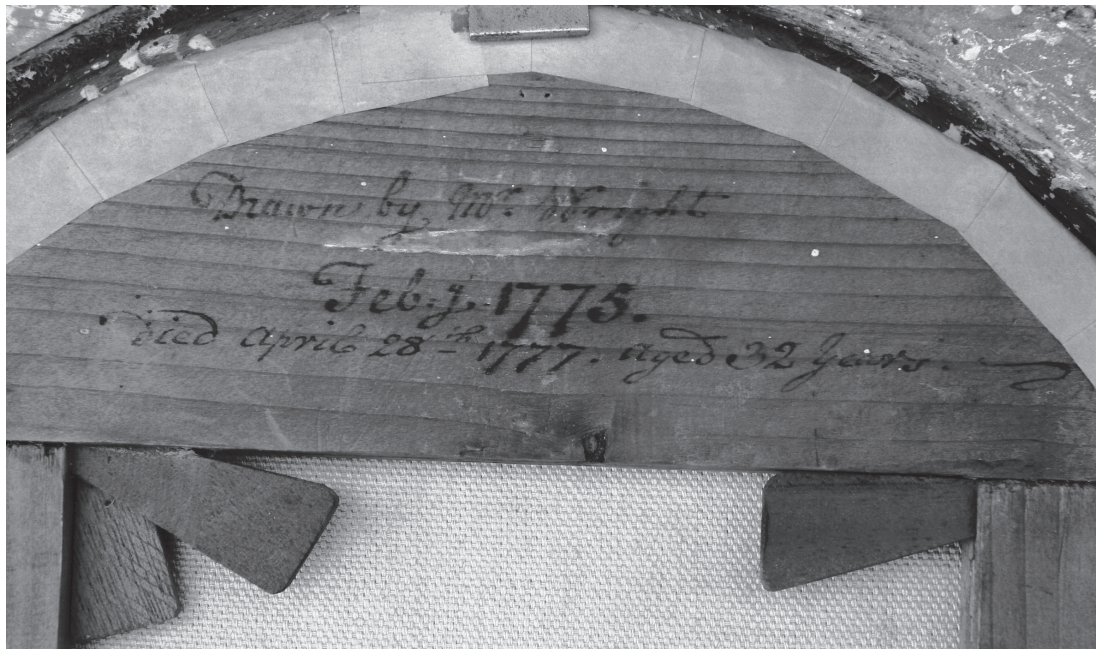


Figure 17c. Handwritten inscription on back of frame.

The United States  
To Joseph Wright ... Dr  
Jan<sup>y</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1785 To Modelling & Completing  
the Bust of His Excellency  
Genl Washington agreeable  
to order of Congress - 50 guineas

**Figure 18.** Handwritten bill tendered from Joseph Wright, Jr. to the U.S. Government for his work on a bust of George Washington. Dated January 20, 1785. *Papers of the Continental Congress, National Archives.*

## Conclusions

There is a lot of mystery surrounding who engraved each of the silver oval Washington Indian Peace Medals and when. Through detailed analysis and the discovery of hidden initials, signature engraving styles, and symbolism, this paper sheds light on the identities of some of the Philadelphia engravers charged with hand-engraving these important pieces of Americana. Most, if not all of these engravers appear to be known associates of Robert Scot, the famous Scottish line engraver, first Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint, and Freemason. We are optimistic that this endeavor will serve as a starting point for similar investigations and future debate on other silver oval medals with and without indisputable provenance. These earliest relics of the U.S. Mint are of such great importance to early America, they should bring scholars together to advance their study.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Woolaroc Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Michael Hall at Michael Hall Antiques, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ontario County Historical Society, Princeton University, Brown University, the U.S. Department of State, and the National Portrait Gallery for their assistance in acquiring high resolution images. We would also like to thank Mr. Michel-Gérald Boutet for lending his expertise in the partial translation of the Ogham found during this investigation.